

Are You Adequately Covered?

ARE YOU ADEQUATELY COVERED? The knock on the door that brought the insurance man, the man from the 'Pru', sent shivers down the backs of most households. No matter how 's dressed up, insurance always appears to be an unnecessary evil. If you have never made a claim, it seems like a waste of money. On the other hand, how many times have things happened to friends or family when either no cover or too little cover was in place? 's then that you wished you had taken out insurance. So why is insurance so important and how much is needed? Time and Unforeseen occurrences The greatest book says that time and unforeseen occurrences befall us all. Whether we like to admit it or not, the age old saying that only two things are guaranteed'hellip;.death and taxes, is true. If you have a family, what will happen should something unfortunate befall you? How will the cost of rent, mortgage, school fees, food and clothing etc be met? Of course money cannot replace the loss of a loved one, however, it is right and correct to ensure those left behind do not suffer even further. This can be achieved by providing adequate Life Insurance. Life Insurance is available in two basic forms, Whole of life or Term. The latter provides cover for a pre-determined period of time, whilst the former provides cover throughout life. How much cover is required is determined by a number of factors such as how many children, their ages, cost of living, schooling, outstanding mortgages etc etc. and everyone's circumstances are different. This is where a good insurance broker can help. 's a fact that no widow or widower has ever complained of having had too much life insurance cover. Therefore the level of cover needs to be adequate. Critical Illness It perhaps would be more appropriate for this form of insurance to be called Life Insurance, as it pays out on diagnosis of certain forms of life threatening illness such as a stroke, heart attack etc. Many who suffer from this type of illness survive, but may be incapacitated. Critical Illness usually is an additional option on most life insurance policies, however, it is available as 'stand alone's cover. Medical Insurance It is absolutely essential that all expatriates should have adequate medical insurance. It's a sad fact that very few have. One example is of the owner of a small company who suffered a heart attack brought on by the not usual lifestyle of smoking, drinking etc. He was rushed to hospital where he was left on a trolley in the corridor. He needed an emergency operation to open the artery which had become blocked. As he didn't have any medical insurance he was told that all they could do was to give him some medicine and send him home. He was lucky, his friends came up with the B350,000 for his operation and saved his life. This brings two points to mind, first its grossly unfair to put the burden onto others. Secondly, just having some insurance may not be enough, the level of insurance has to be sufficient to cover such eventualities. Another example which recently happened in Pattaya is that of a man knocked off his motorbike by a drunk driver. He did have insurance and was taken to one of the local hospitals where it was determined he needed emergency operation for a severe head injury. Although his policy covered him for surgery up to B70,000 the hospital refused to operate as the cost would be much higher at B100,000. The operation only took place after friends were able to collect the B30,000 difference. Unfortunately, the man died from complications. The question that arises is, did the delay in receiving treatment make a difference? Had he received the operation immediately, could he have been saved? Such examples may sound frightening and indeed they are, but they are reality. Every reader will, 'm sure, know of someone who has suffered an illness, a stroke, a heart attack, had an accident or lost a loved one. It may sound morbid, but in fact it is necessary to be practical and be prepared for such events. Medical insurance is available as full international cover, suitable for those travelling frequently and local cover for those mainly based here in Thailand. The difference between the two types is the level of cover, which is higher for full international cover and the cost. Local medical cover can be obtained quite cheaply, however, it is vital to choose a level of cover that will ensure protection in the event of a costly illness. Personal Accident To compliment medical insurance, it is also wise to obtain Personal Accident Insurance which provides additional cover in the event of an unfortunate accident. With some types of policies this is available as an optional extra, more usually it is taken out separately. This type of insurance provides additional funds in the event of loss of life, limbs, sight, and permanent disability. Additional medical cover is also provided, along with cover if an accident occurs whilst riding a motorcycle. This type of cover is very inexpensive and every member of the family should be covered. If you, your wife, girlfriend, partner or any member of your family, ride motorbikes or motorbike taxis, then this should be viewed as an absolutely essential form of insurance. As an added bonus, certain types of Personal Accident Insurance also provide a weekly income, which will help in the event of loss of earnings. If you haven't got insurance, do something about it today. If you have already got insurance, have the level of cover reviewed. Medical costs are increasing annually'hellip;.Why use an Insurance Broker? There are quite a number of insurance companies with offices located in Thailand, so why use a broker? The most obvious distinction is that the Broker is independent and acts on YOUR behalf. The insurance companies act on THEIR behalf. Each Insurance company only markets their own products whether they are the best for you or not. Whereas a broker acts on YOUR behalf to help you choose the product which is best for YOU. They can research all the products available and recommend the one that matches YOUR specific needs and requirements. In the event of a claim the insurance company's word is final. However, if you have a good broker who has developed a close relationship with the company you are insured with, they can act on your behalf to deal with any disputes and ensure the claim is handled quickly and smoothly. Is it cheaper to go direct? Surely, it will be cheaper to go direct to the insurance company rather than use a broker? Well, in actual fact, surprisingly enough the opposite is true. Standard quotations will be identical. However, in some instances the broker may well be able to negotiate a lower premium which would not be the case if you chose to go direct. Choosing a Broker What makes a good broker? One of the best methods of choosing a broker of course is to obtain recommendations. There are a number of factors to consider:- Do they have a telephone Hotline? Can they be contacted via email? Do they have a website where you can do some of your own research? Do they know what insurance products are available? How quickly can they provide quotations? Do they have a wide range of insurance

companies & products to choose from? Do they have an efficient administration system? For example, the insurance industry here is heavily 'paper dependent'. AA Insurance on the other hand, has developed its own state-of-the-art administration and quotation system which by the end of this year will streamline operations to provide a virtually paperless office. Regarding this innovative and forward thinking approach, one insurance company stated 'We have never worked with a company before that has ideas like AA Insurance'. And another 'It's exciting to meet with a company that wants to do things different to everyone else'. So next time you think about 'popping in' to the local insurance office, stop and call your broker first.

Small Business Insurance

The nature of cities like Pattaya is the proliferation of small businesses. Beauty salons, internet cafés, take-away's, coffee shops, restaurants, gold & jewellery, bars & clubs. In fact, you can probably find virtually every type of small business here. Despite the fact that businesses represent the livelihood of the owners, it's surprising to find how few have insurance. Fire, flooding, shop window breakage, criminal damage, robbery, electrical damage, freezer breakdown, all can have a devastating effect on cash flow. It could even result in the business collapsing completely. How would your business cope with being closed for weeks on end whilst repairs took place? What would be the cost of replacing stock destroyed by fire or flooding? What would happen if one of your customers was injured whilst on your premises? Just a few of the things to be considered.

Insurance coverage comes in two forms, standard pre-packaged or tailor-made. The standard packages provide good levels of cover at low cost. If a business requires something a little different or higher levels of cover then a Tailor made solution can be provided. Small business insurance doesn't have to cost the earth and will allow the owner to get on with the business side of things safe in the knowledge that should a disaster occur, it will be covered. If you have a small business, make sure you are adequately covered.

Corporate Insurance

Large companies with high levels of stock, expensive machinery, tooling, computers & office equipment are from an insurance aspect, a disaster waiting to happen. No matter how efficient and well run a factory is, accidents do happen. A fire out of control can completely destroy stock and ruin machinery. Perhaps worse still are the huge losses that can result from shutdown, whilst damage repairs are carried out. It's quite rare to find a large corporation that fit into the 'insurance package' box. Usually, a tailor-made solution designed specifically to suit their special needs is arranged. This involves a site/company inspection and detailed information regarding levels of stock, machinery costs etc. Not forgetting also the human element. Staff are as important to a company as its machinery. Group life, medical and personal accident insurance are a must to provide peace of mind to both staff and company. In addition, liability insurance will cover claims should an employee or third party be injured whilst on or off the premises. Coverage can also be extended to include product liability.

Conclusion

Whether you like it or not, as an individual, a small business or a corporation, you NEED insurance. It is a necessary 'evil', which can provide peace of mind and the necessary monetary support when things do go wrong. Ask yourself today, 'Are YOU adequately covered?'