

# Ways to check insurance claims will be paid

Before you head off on holiday, make sure your insurance is in place. Know what you're covered for, and that if you are robbed, your claims will be paid. Just because your jewellery is covered for theft inside your home doesn't mean it will be covered outside your house.

The average number of insurance claims for December last year and January this year was 26% higher than those between June and November last year, according to an analysis of insurance claims by Alexander Forbes Insurance.

The claims were specifically related to theft, burglary and lightning.

Clients claimed 10% more for theft over this period, 11% more for burglary and as much as 198% more for lightning. Claims for household contents were 19% higher.

Alexander Forbes Insurance's managing director Gari Dombo advises insurance policy holders to check that their household contents cover is up to date and correctly lists the replacement value of insured goods.

"Your valuables might be worth much more than you realise. For example, the price of gold has increased by 120% over the past five years, which will obviously have an effect on your gold coins and jewellery," he said.

Here are some ways to minimise your risks.

- Before you let your partner or a friend share the driving, ensure they are covered by your policy;
- Check how much excess you will have to pay in the event of an accident;
- Alert your security company that you're going away. You may want to alert a neighbour too;
- If you're driving to another country, make sure your insurance policy covers you. Some insurers will require you to take the car to the border before they will pick it up. They may cover the costs of getting the car to the border, but you have to figure out how to get it there. You should buy the compulsory vehicle liability insurance of the country at the border;
- All-risks cover is designed to cover items you take out of your home. Check that everything you take with you is covered for the correct amounts;
- Check that your alarm system is working;
- Have someone clear your mail regularly while you're away;
- Keep control of maintenance issues to prevent them from becoming problems while you are away;
- Unplug all electronic equipment to protect it from lightning and power surges;
- Switch off your geysers. You'll save electricity and protect yourself against the risk of a burst or leaking pipe;
- Make sure you have the numbers for all support services, such as the police;

- Don't forget the fine print - most policies stipulate burglar bars, security doors and an electric fence or alarm. Not having the security required by your policy could result in any claims you may lodge being rejected.

Source: *Sunday Times* via I-Net Bridge

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