

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INSURANCE COMPANIES

Everyone knows accidents will happen. To soften the blow we buy insurance, trusting insurance company promises that they will help pay our damages. But do insurance companies keep their promise? What really happens after an accident, and what accident victims can do about it, is something everyone should know.

After a car or other accident, the victim usually makes a claim to an insurance company. Their goal is to get paid for medical bills, lost wages, property damage and other losses. But the insurance company doesn't make money by paying claims. They make money by **not** paying claims. So insurers often use tactics to avoid or delay paying claims. Here are some they use, and how to avoid being a victim.

- They gain the public's and your confidence by using friendly slogans like "You're in good hands," or "Like a good neighbor." They act as if they are working for you. Don't let these slogans fool you. Insurance adjusters, no matter what they say, work for the insurance company, not you.
 - Adjusters deny many claims they know are covered. They do this in the hope that by denying a claim they won't hear more about it, even if the denial was wrong. This makes the insurance company more money. Protect yourself after an accident by asking a lawyer about any claim an insurance company denies.
 - Insurers take a narrow view of what's covered. They do this despite court cases telling them to take a broad view of coverage. A lawyer can tell you truthfully if a claim is covered.
 - Adjusters try to persuade accident victims not to use a lawyer. They do this because they know that accident victims who use lawyers are likely to get higher settlements.
 - Insurers delay paying claims. They hope this delay makes you give up your claim, or that by the time you decide to file a lawsuit, the deadline for filing has passed.
 - Insurers conceal information that may help you. By having a lawyer's help, you're more likely to get a full investigation, so any information that benefits you is revealed.
- Insurers say your claim is worth less than they know it is. Again, get a lawyer's help. Your lawyer can tell you everything you can recover damages for, and protect you against adjusters who try to lowball you in the claim settlement process.

These are some tactics adjusters use to lower accident payouts and make more money for the insurance company. By knowing about them, you can identify when they happen to you. You can then take action to avoid being a victim twice – once at the accident and again at the hands of an insurance company.



