

If you've arranged for a friend or neighbour to keep an eye on your home...

What Will You Do When Your Home is Seized and Awarded to Your Neighbour?

<name>

<street address>

Niagara on the Lake, ON <postal code>

I noticed you weren't home this winter. *

Plenty of people here in Niagara on the Lake choose to spend winter elsewhere. And most of them don't realize their vacant homes are not insured.

3 critically important details you must know before you leave...

Especially if you have a friend or neighbour keeping an eye on your house...

1. **Temporary absence exclusion.** There's a clause in your insurance policy that says after 48-96 hours a competent adult must enter the premises to keep all of the insurances valid.
2. **Service personnel exclusion.** Any person who performs a service on your home or property is excluded from your insurance policy.

In other words, if a person you've either hired or asked a favour of comes on your property and falls down and is hurt, you're third party liability insurance does not cover that incident – you do.

Service professionals have their own insurance. But if your neighbor looks after your property while you're away, and is somehow accidentally hurt... **you're not covered.**

In fact, if it's a young person with an entire life yet to live, the judgment may force you to support her for the rest of her life. If her residence requires remodeling to assist her living... it will be you –not your insurance company – who pays for those expensive renovations.

3. **Get it in writing.** Chances are your broker will verbally assure you you're covered. Unfortunately, the insurance company may not stand behind your broker's verbal assurance.

In my quest to get definite answers to the question of insurance coverage of temporarily vacant property, I contacted five insurers – not brokers, actual underwriting insurers -- two in the UK, two in New York, and one in Bermuda.

All five insurers gave variations of the same answer...

- “I think you'll be okay.”
- “Maybe.”
- “You should be all right”

Well... you can call me cynical and jaded... but I'm not very comfortable with the potential legal ramifications of a verbal, "I think you're okay."

So I asked each of them, "Will you send me a letter to that effect?"

And here's where they ALL AGREED...

NONE of them would commit to a letter. None would put it in writing.

Why won't insurance companies put it in writing?

The best answer came from an insurance agent in St Catharines – the person who sold insurance to the homeowner -- NOT the company that holds the policy.

"We used to make a fortune in house insurance, and paying out the odd claim was no big deal. But now with all these catastrophes the payouts have been very large. There's no money for the companies in house insurance any more... so the days of an insurance company paying out when it doesn't have to are over."

So if there's an "incident" while you're away, the insurance company -- always looking for an excuse not to pay – will look for a way to avoid paying you.

You're at their mercy.

But don't take my word for it...

Contact your insurance broker right now.

To make it easier for you to get your broker's answer in writing, please use the free forms available at my website -- www.argushousewatch.com

And when you have your broker's answer in writing... schedule a Free No Obligation consultation on protecting your home while you're away by calling me at **905-468-4682**... or if you're not in Niagara on the Lake when reading this, **1-800-649-8436**.

Thank you,

Jim Maw, President
Argus House Watch Services

PS: Even when your driveway and sidewalk are regularly shoveled and papers removed... certain things -- noticeable to those who know what to look for -- "announce" that your home is vacant.

*If I know... who else knows?