

“THE CIRCLE OF SAFETY”

CONSUMER AWARENESS ADVISOR

News and Tips to Make Your Life Easier, Safer and Happier!

For Friends and Clients of Brown-Phillips Insurance

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Driving Safe With Cruise Control

We all drive in the rain or other slippery conditions sometime. But using your cruise control on wet surfaces is extremely dangerous.

You may have received chain e-mail about this topic that tells the story of a woman whose car allegedly flew in the air in Texas. The car was totaled, but she was OK.

I did some checking and found that the validity of the story is in question, but the danger of using cruise control on wet roads is VALID!

As you probably know, hydroplaning occurs when your tires actually lose contact with the road and are riding on a thin sheet of water. When this happens, your wheels are spinning with no traction.

The only way to stop this wheel spin and maintain control is to reduce power. However, an activated cruise control system will continue to apply power, keeping the wheels spinning!

By the time you disengage the cruise control you may have already lost control.

Hydroplaning STARTS at speeds as low as 35 mph, and at 55 mph you could be riding entirely on a sheet of water!

Please, follow these two simple, but life-saving safety tips. When the road is wet ...

1. Turn off your cruise control, and
2. SLOW DOWN and drive safely. Posted speed limits are for dry road conditions.

Inside This Issue...

ID Protection Advice.....Page 1
 Tackling Taxes.....Page 2

Sidebars: Cruise Control Driving & Chocolate Valentine Treat

Are YOU The Client of the Month?
See Page 3 to find out if you won!

ID Protection Advice

This is good common sense advice for you to read and share. Just about nothing could be worse than having your identity stolen and it happens every day. Take a few minutes, read through this small article and protect yourself!

1. Do not sign the back of your credit cards. Instead, in that little space on the back, write “PHOTO ID REQUIRED.”
2. If you are still paying your credit card bills with a check, DO NOT write the complete account number on the reference line on your check. Just the last 4 digits are sufficient. The credit card company knows the rest of the number, and anyone handling your check will not have access to that account number.
3. Do not place your phone number on your check. If you have a PO Box, use that number instead of your street address. NEVER have your Social Security number on your checks. No one should be asking for that as ID. Have your initials printed on your check instead of your full name. Use as little personal information as possible on your checks.
4. Consider paying your bills through your bank’s billpay service online. Easier and safer, and you don’t have to hope that the post office gets your payment where it needs to go on time.
5. Photocopy the contents of your wallet – both sides of your credit cards, licenses, memberships, etc. Then take that copy and put it in a safe place. Include the phone numbers of the three credit reporting agencies with this information.

Equifax – 1-800-525-6285

Experian (formerly TRW) 1-888-397-3742

TransUnion 1-800-680-7289

Social Security Administration (Fraud Alert) 1—800-269-0271

6. If you are a victim of theft, file a police report immediately, and then call your bank and the credit card numbers. With the speed of the internet, it doesn’t take but a few minutes for damage to happen. The sooner you can report theft, the sooner you are protected.

Danger!
**Injured Pets May Not Be
Themselves**

What if a pet becomes ill or gets badly injured. Would you know what to do?

Here are some helpful hints that could save a pet's life AND protect you or a member of your family:

- Approach the ill or injured pet slowly and cautiously. Even your own pet can become aggressive when in pain or scared.
- Don't make any sudden or loud movements; you might scare the animal even further.
- If needed, use towels or blankets to subdue cats or small dogs.
- Keep your veterinarian's phone number and address in a convenient location (near the phone, perhaps?) in your home.
- Also, keep the phone number and address of an after-hours veterinary clinic, as well as directions to that clinic, in a convenient location. If possible, call the clinic ahead of time so the on-duty staff knows you're coming and the nature of your pet's illness or injury.

Hopefully you will never have to deal with a situation where you need to seek emergency aid for an animal, but if you do, exercise caution, protect yourself and your family first and then protect the animal.

REMINDER
DAY LIGHT SAVING TIME

Sunday, March 8

SPRING FORWARD

**Also a good time to check your
smoke detector and swap out the
batteries if necessary**

Tackling Taxes

How to Eliminate The Most Common Mistakes on Returns

When you are doing your taxes this year, or after you receive your return from your accountant, consider this: The most common mistakes made on returns involve incorrect addition or subtraction. And it's not just taxpayers who display poor arithmetic. The IRS occasionally adds or subtracts incorrectly when it is making a "correction" on returns. The IRS does review returns for errors of arithmetic and math, and issues a notice of tax due or overpayment as a result of the error(s).

Unfortunately, poor math is just one of several common mistakes made by taxpayers (and, in some cases, accountants) in preparing returns:

Omission of Interest and Dividend Payments – The IRS cross-checks about 96% of the interest and dividend payments reported to it by banks, brokerage houses and other financial institutions, and sends out notices for taxes and penalties due as a result. However, about half of the 10 million correction notices issued each year are "incorrect, unresponsive, unclear, or incomplete," according to the IRS's auditor, the General Accounting Office.

If you receive a correction notice that is incorrect, follow the procedures to contest it, or contact the IRS's local problem resolution office.

Omission of Dividend and Capital Gain Payments – In this case, it's failing to keep proper track of an investment's "basis," which not only includes the value of your initial investment, but any dividends and capital gains you receive **and are taxed on in the year they are paid.**

If you don't add dividend and capital gains payments to the value of your initial investment, you will overstate the ultimate capital gain you report when you sell the investment.

For example, say you put \$1,000 in a mutual fund and over the years you receive \$500 in dividends and capital gains. Then you sell the fund and receive \$2,000. Your capital gain was \$500, not \$1,000.

Failing to Bunch Deductions – Some categories of deductions, namely medical and miscellaneous expenses, require a minimum amount before you can claim any deduction. For example, you can deduct only those medical expenses that exceed 7.5% of your adjusted gross income. If you have a large amount, but maybe not enough to surpass the 7.5% threshold, you should consider pre-paying bills in December that are due in January.

Failing to Take Deductions in a Timely Manner – January is no time to make charitable contributions (old clothes, furniture, appliances, cash) that could be made in December – and therefore applied to the previous year's taxes.

Once you complete your return, check it several times for errors. Have other people – a spouse, a close relative or friend – look it over as well.

If you use an accountant, make sure you go over the return as carefully as possible. Remember, if your accountant makes a mistake, you are responsible for any additional tax that might be owed.

Thank You! Thank You!

Thanks to all our clients who graciously referred their family, friends and associates to our agency:

Karen Marr, Abraham Nyamwange, Ankur Shah, Shannon Fuller, Yusuf Alghawas, Kristy Auteri, Amanda Page Dixon, Fonda Byerson, Hatice Karahan

Are You The Client of the Month?

Well, you can be! By referring someone to our office for a quote, you will be entered in our monthly drawing for your choice of a \$50 Spa Finder gift certificate, or a \$50 gas card. In addition, you will be entered in our annual drawing for a 42" flat screen TV...just for telling others about us!

We will honor our winners here each month, so send us a referral, and watch for your name.

Did you know.....

We offer all types of insurance!

- Auto
- Home
- Umbrella
- Life
- Mobile Home
- Motorcycle
- RV/ATV
- Boat/Watercraft
- Commercial Auto

www.BPQuotes.com

Spotlight on...



Hello, my name is Darlene Hill. I am married with three children and our family has made Raleigh their home for the past twenty-five years. I am originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but I love it here! Recently, we celebrated my 1 year anniversary with Brown-Phillips Insurance. I look forward to assisting you with your insurance needs in the future.

Client Of The Month...



Congratulations to Amanda Page Dixon, for sending a referral our way! Amanda won a \$50.00 Exxon gas card and is also entered in our annual drawing for a 42" flat screen TV. Thanks, Amanda!

"I was given a wonderful rate
along with the kind staff."

Geraldine Gilbert, *Raleigh, N.C.*

"Treat your wife like a thoroughbred, and you'll never have a nag."

-Zig Ziglar

Tell Others About Us and Win a Prize!

We are thrilled to launch our referral program beginning this month! Refer a friend or family member, and you will be entered in our monthly drawing for your choice of a \$50 Spa Finder gift certificate or \$50 gas card. In addition, you will be entered in our annual drawing for a 42" flat screen television!! See our website at www.BPReferrals.com for more details.

We realize you have a choice—thank you for choosing Brown-Phillips Insurance!

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