

IS YOUR FAMILY PROTECTED?

If you, your spouse, or your children are involved in a motor vehicle accident, do you have the right insurance coverage, or enough coverage, to cover your loss? Would you have enough insurance coverage for another family if someone in your family caused an accident? Have you ever read your policy or the declaration page your insurance company sends you? Did your insurance agent explain what you purchased when you bought your coverage?

At our firm, we have learned over the years that most people do not know what insurance they have and what it covers. Additionally, many individuals don't have insurance even though it is now the law in Alabama (the State does not properly monitor and police those who continue to drive without insurance). As a result, we thought this would be a good place to encourage those who have insurance to look at their insurance policies and ask their agents questions, and for those who don't have insurance, we encourage you to get it.

With respect to automobile insurance in Alabama, there are four main types of coverage (there are others): (1) medical payments; (2) collision; (3) liability; and (4) uninsured motorists. Medical payment coverage is usually between \$1,000.00 and \$5,000.00, but it can be for more. This coverage applies when someone is injured in your car and incurs medical bills. It doesn't matter who was at fault in the accident in order to obtain these payments.

Collision coverage is for any property damage which results due to an accident. Again, this coverage does not depend upon the fault of any person. If you are at fault, your coverage will still apply to fix your vehicle, or if it's a total loss, to provide the fair market value for your vehicle (only the fair market value, not what you owe the finance company).

Liability coverage is what is now mandatory in Alabama. This is what protects you if you are negligent and cause injury to someone else. In Alabama, the minimum limit for liability coverage is \$20,000.00. In other words, if someone runs a red light and causes injury to you, they must have at least \$20,000.00 of liability insurance to cover your injuries and vice versa. Unfortunately, many individuals in Alabama continue to drive without liability insurance which makes the next coverage one of the most important.

Uninsured motorists coverage kicks in if you or someone in your car is injured, and the person who caused the accident did not have any insurance. Imagine that you are driving down the road with two children in the car, and an uninsured drunk runs his vehicle into yours. If you do not have any uninsured motorists coverage, you and the children will not have any possibility of compensation in the event a tragic injury occurs. Furthermore, this coverage also applies if the other individual's insurance is not enough to cover your injuries, i.e.: underinsured.

Alabama law requires insurance carriers to provide uninsured motorist coverage for a minimum of \$20,000.00 unless you reject such coverage IN WRITING. Many agents do not explain this coverage to their customers because they can save their customers money. You should NEVER reject uninsured motorist coverage. We have witnessed too many situations where neither driver had insurance, and therefore, the injured party did not receive any compensation for the loss.

If you have any questions regarding your insurance coverage, please do not hesitate to give us a call. Our goal is for our clients to be protected in the event an unfortunate incident occurs. While no one expects accidents and injury, they do occur, and when they do, you need to be prepared so that you can minimize your loss.