



Conducting a Personal Property Inventory

Take the time to compile an inventory of your home now, and it will save you precious time and frustration later. We've provided a worksheet and easy-to-follow instructions to help you complete a thorough inventory of your possessions.

Benefits of having a personal property inventory

- Helps to ensure you have the coverage you need.
- In the event of a loss, it makes it easier for you to file a complete and prompt claim, supported by accurate documentation.
- Helps determine the replacement cost of your lost or damaged possessions to settle your claim quickly (subject to the provisions of your homeowners or renters policy).

How to begin

We've developed a simple worksheet that you can print. Make as many copies as you need...one for each room of your home.

- Simply walk through each room and write down the items you see. Take your time!
- Be sure to list all items of value, along with their year of purchase, original price, and current estimated value. If you don't have all of the relevant information at the time of your "walkthrough", leave blanks and fill them in later after checking your purchase records.

As you record your possessions, don't forget:

- Fireplace accessories, air conditioners and stereo equipment which you may have in your living room.
- Table linens and decorative items which may be in your dining room.
- Bar equipment, including wines and liquors; toys, etc. In your recreation or family room.
- Window accessories, floor coverings and valuable light fixtures you may have placed in your halls, sun-rooms or porches.
- Mirrors, small electrical appliances such as toothbrushes, water pics, shavers and hairsetters, scales, cosmetics and medicines in the bathroom.
- Clothing and bed linens in the bedroom(s).
- Pots and pans, disposals, small electrical appliances such as blenders, can openers, food processors and similar items; cleaning utensils such as mops and brooms in the kitchen.
- Tools, auto equipment; barbecue equipment, fans, freezers, garden tools, holiday decorations, painting equipment, swimming pool accessories and vacuum cleaners from the attic, basement or garage.
- Arts and crafts supplies and equipment, board games, bicycles, exercise equipment and kid's toys.

As you're completing your inventory, take the opportunity to mark valuable items such as TVs, VCRs, cameras, etc., with an indelible identification number recognizable to police. Your state's initials plus your driver's license, your area code and phone number, or your Social Security number could help authorities identify and return items if they were lost or stolen.

Do you own a number of "priceless" items, such as antique jewelry or original works of art? If so, it's wise to have these appraised to establish their value. This will help ensure that, in the event of a loss, you receive an insurance settlement that is appropriate to the true value of these items. An independent agent or Travelers of New Jersey representative can work with you to determine the right kind of coverage for these special items.

A photographic record of your belongings

Photographs are an important supplement to your written inventory because they give details that written descriptions cannot. In addition, they document the quality, appearance, and size of the things you own. Here are some additional things to keep in mind:

- Use a camera you are comfortable with, but be certain to use color film. Color film will best show the true characteristics and quality of your possessions. If you have a VCR and video camera, you can create an especially valuable photographic record of your home and possessions. A video of each room in your home, as well as hallways, porches, gardens and shrubbery, will help establish the general appearance and quality of your home in addition to documenting your personal possessions.
- Photograph systematically. Start with one wall in the living room, taking as many photographs as necessary to record the entire room's contents. Then do the same with all of the other rooms in your home.
- Don't forget to open closets. Even though photographs can't document the quality of your wardrobe, they do record the quantity.
- Your basement, garage or attic may not hold valuable items, but they do hold items you would need to replace in the event of a major loss. Check each of these locations for items that should be photographed such as power tools, lawn furniture, laundry appliances, etc.
- Valuable small items such as silverware, furs, china or crystal, as well as larger items such as sculptures, paintings or collections must be recorded with extra care. Lay small items out on a plain cloth or rug, next to a ruler (to establish actual size). Try to photograph at close range in order to include as many of the visual details as possible. Turn over a single piece of china or silver to show the hallmark, manufacturer and pattern name.
- As soon as you receive your finished prints, mark each with the name of the item(s) and their location in your home (as recorded in your written inventory).
- When you acquire new items, be sure to photograph them and add them to your written inventory.
- Keep the photos with your inventory. Be certain to store them in a safe place outside your home, such as a safe deposit box. Check with your agent to see if they can place a copy of your inventory with your other records in their files.
- If you own a second residence, such as a summer cottage or beach house, you should complete a separate inventory for that residence.

Remember, once you are all done, compare the estimated value of your possessions to the amount of insurance you have. Don't wait until after they are lost or damaged to find out you don't have enough coverage. See your independent insurance agent or Travelers of New Jersey representative and make sure your valuable possessions have the protection they deserve.

