

NATIONAL SURVEY FINDS MANY CONSUMERS MISSING OUT ON INSURANCE DISCOUNTS

Trusted Choice® recommends consumers maximize little-known discounts to ‘nickel and dime’ their way to big savings.

Alexandria, VA, Nov. 12, 2009 — As millions of Americans look for ways to stretch their budgets to survive these tough economic times, too many are not utilizing all of the discounts that may be available to them in their homeowner and auto insurance, according to a new national survey conducted for Trusted Choice® and the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America (the Big “I”).

The survey asked home and auto owners if they believed they are taking full advantage of all the discounts they qualified for on their homeowners and auto insurance policies. More than 34% of respondents, representing 53 million households, admitted they are probably not taking advantage of all homeowners insurance discounts or said that they simply didn’t know. Regarding auto coverage, more than 20% of car owners either didn’t know or said they were not maximizing all the car insurance discounts available to them.

“The latest survey shows what we suspected: many Americans could be foolishly throwing money away because they fail to ask about insurance discounts for which they may qualify,” says Madelyn Flannagan, Big “I” vice president of agent development, education and research. “Companies often offer some unique, regional, very specific and, at times, quirky discounts. In these economic times, every dollar counts—some consumers may be able to nickel and dime their way to big savings.”

And those who stand to benefit most from the discounts are often those who aren’t taking advantage of them: nearly 38% of respondents with a household income of less than \$25,000 said they weren’t taking advantage of all possible homeowners discounts or said they didn’t know.

The survey also found that the largest percentage of respondents, about 26%, estimated they save 6-10% on their insurance premiums by using discounts. In reality, many consumers could be saving significantly more—as much as 30%.

“One of the biggest advantages to using an independent insurance agent is that they can explore the various companies and find the best possible coverage for each individual family or business,” says Robert A. Rusbuldt, Big “I” president & CEO. “Finding specific discounts can be time-consuming and confusing, so we advise consumers to consult with their Trusted Choice® independent insurance agent and ask questions.”

HOME INSURANCE

The Big “I” and Trusted Choice offer the following tips that may lead to substantial homeowners insurance savings.

- **LIFE IN A GATED COMMUNITY?** Some homeowners are entitled to gated community discounts.

- **WHAT'S YOUR HOUSE WEARING?** Some insurers give hail resistant roof discounts for Class 4 roofs and credits can be sizeable in some territories.
- **"EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN:"** Some companies are coming out with new rating models that are oriented toward offering lower rates to new customers. Sometimes, a customer can even save money by applying for a new policy with the same company.
- **'FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE' MAY ALSO APPLY TO YOUR CREDIT SCORE:** For married couples, sometimes one person will have a better credit score than the other. Since some companies will use the score of the first person named on the application, putting the spouse with the best credit score on first can result in a lower rate.
- **GOT NEW WIRES?** Depending on the age of newer electrical wiring in your home, you may qualify for an age of wiring discount.
- **HAS IT REALLY BEEN 10 YEARS?** If you have not filed any home insurance claims in the last 10 years, ask about a discount. "Claims-free" homeowners can often save up to 20%.

AUTO INSURANCE

The Big "I" and Trusted Choice provide the following tips and considerations that may lead to big auto insurance savings.

- **IS YOUR TEEN A SCOUT?** Some insurers give credits to young drivers who are involved in organizations such as Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts.
- **WHAT'S YOUR ALMA MATER?** At least one insurer gives a 5% credit if a driver is a graduate of a university on the company's approved list.
- **DO YOU HAVE A COMPANY CAR?** Many carriers will give a multi-car discount to consumers who have a company car even if they only own one personal vehicle.
- **HAVE YOU BEEN WIDOWED?** Some insurers give "married" discounts to widows and widowers.
- **ARE YOU SHOPPING FOR NEW WHEELS?** Before you buy a car, make a short list of the ones you're considering and ask your agent to estimate the difference in insurance premiums. The difference could save you thousands of dollars.
- **ARE YOU A GREEN COMMUTER?** Consider car pooling to reduce your commute frequency and ask your agent if that will impact your auto premium. In addition to reducing your carbon footprint, you may also be fattening your wallet.
- **HOW YOUNG ARE YOU?** In some states, if you're 55 or older, and you're the principal driver of your insured car, you could save on your premiums by taking an approved defensive driving class.

- **GOT A TRACTOR?** If you're a full-time farmer or rancher, and you're insuring a farm or ranch vehicle used exclusively for work on your property, a farm vehicle bonus could help keep your costs down.

MORE WELL-KNOWN DISCOUNTS:

While there are plenty of quirky discounts your independent agent can investigate, there are many 'tried and true' discounts that many, but not all, insurance consumers know.

- **UNEMPLOYED?** People who are out of work should qualify for a low-mileage discount or lower rating factor that can save 5-10% on their auto premium.
- **MULTIPLE POLICIES?** If you have property insurance with ONE company, you may qualify for a multiple policy discount to lower both your auto and your home insurance premiums by as much as 10-15%.
- **SOUND THE ALARMS!** Alarm credits are often available if your home is equipped with two or more of the following: fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, sprinklers, deadbolt locks and a burglar alarm. Savings can be up to 15%. (Criteria vary in some states. An agent can help determine what applies in your area.)
- **ACCIDENT-FREE FOR THREE YEARS?** If you've been safe on the road and accident-free for the past three years, and you haven't received any moving violations, you might qualify for a good record discount. To be eligible, you and all additional drivers also need to have carried continuous, standard automobile liability insurance during those same three years. If you're a new driver and received your license within the past three years, you, too, could be eligible. Just make sure you meet the above qualifications from the date your license was issued.
- **DOES YOUR CAR HAVE SAFETY FEATURES?** Auto insurance discounts apply in many states, if your car comes equipped with approved anti-theft devices, anti-lock brakes, and/or passive restraint systems such as airbags.

The survey was conducted for Trusted Choice® via telephone by International Communications Research (ICR); an independent research company in Media, Pa. Interviews of a nationally representative sample of 1058 U.S. households were conducted in Oct. 28 – Nov. 1, 2009. More information about ICR can be obtained at <http://www.icrsurvey.com>.