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Insurance renewals – it's ALWAYS best to tell the truth!

Published: March 28, 2018

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/insurance-renewals-its-always-best-to-tell-the-truth/>



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need to tell the insurer. Always read the small print too on your renewal documentation, and in any cases of doubt, ask your insurers... DON'T just assume...

Having car insurance is a legal requirement for motorists, but whether it's valid or not depends on how accurate the current information your insurance company holds is. Providing false information or failing to update with changes of circumstance, whether accidentally or not, can invalidate your insurance meaning your insurer is able to refuse to pay out for claims, or even cancel your policy. Some types of misinformation may even be classed as fraud and could see you end up in court.

CarParts4Less.co.uk shares ten easy to make mistakes, that might be invalidating your car insurance.

1. Lying about your main address

Car insurance premiums can vary depending on the postcode, as some areas have higher rates of thefts and break ins. It can be tempting to put down your home address as somewhere different to where your car stays every night - a parents' house while you are at university, for example, or at your house when you spend five nights a week living at your partner's. However, doing so can mean your insurer can refuse to pay out any claims made, for example if your car is broken into in the location it actually resides.

Insurance companies have investigative departments (called special investigations unit, or SUI) dedicated to making sure information on your insurance and claims are correct, so while you may think you can get away with not updating your address, the likelihood is that this will be found out when you make a claim.

2. Ignoring your morning commute

There are three types of car usage that insurance covers; social only, social and commuting, and business. Social only insurance covers driving for social or leisure use; driving to and from friends' houses, going to the supermarket, etc. The commute to and from work, or even to and from the train station, are not covered by this policy, so upgrading to a social and



commuting is necessary, even if you only commute a few times a month. Insurance companies may dispute or refuse claims made during a commute if the policy is social use only, even if it is claimed to be only a one off.

If you use your car for work purposes outside of commuting, for example using it to get to meetings, or carrying equipment, you will need to get business cover.

3. Not informing your insurer about any car modifications

Car modifications can affect your insurance premium for two reasons; if they increase the likelihood of an accident, or if they increase the likelihood of theft. Optional add-ons for brand new cars, including something as simple and common as fitting in a SatNav, can impact insurance so it's important to ensure these options are noted when applying for insurance. Your insurer will also need to be made aware of modifications that are made during your policy, as this may require a change in policy.

4. Not informing your insurance company of minor accidents

In the case of small bumps or minor accidents where only cosmetic damage occurs, it's common for motorists to have their car fixed without making a claim. However, even if you intend not to claim, it is important to inform your insurance of any damage received, as to not do so is a breach of your policy. This helps in the event that the other driver changes their mind and decides to claim, and also ensures damage is accounted for if you do need to claim after future incidents – damage which is inconsistent with a claim may mean that your claim is denied.

5. 'Fronting'

Insurance for young drivers often costs more than for groups deemed less of a risk, and one way some motorists try and get round these higher premiums is by having a low risk driver, such as a parent or partner, named as the main policy holder, and adding the real motorist as a named driver. If you get caught 'fronting', your policy will immediately be cancelled, and any claims denied. These cases are often taken to court, too, as it is classed as insurance fraud, with outcomes including fines of up to £5,000 and six points on your



licence.

6. Using more miles than you thought

Your annual mileage is one of the main factors used to calculate your insurance premium; the higher the mileage, the higher the cost. It's important to be as accurate as possible when providing this figure, rather than just guessing, as it's possible your insurance provider will decide not to pay a claim if your mileage is higher than what you've estimated. When working out how many miles you drive, don't forget to include weekends away, weekly shopping, etc, and add some contingency miles – it's better to be safe than sorry!

7. Driving with pets

If you are driving with your pet in the car, you are legally required to make sure they are secured. Unsecured pets can make a car more at risk of accidents, as they may distract the driver or even physically get in the way of driving. If you crash with an unsecured pet in the car, it's likely that your insurance company will refuse to pay for your claim.

8. Letting other people drive your car

While it's possible for your friends or family to have insurance policies that allow them to drive other people's cars, it is unlikely these policies cover damage to the vehicle in the event they are in an accident. It's more than likely that your own policy only covers vehicle damage that happens when a named driver is in the car, so while your friend can legally drive it, any accidents that occur may not be able to be claimed for.

9. You've recently changed jobs

Your current occupation is one of the factors used to determine your risk profile, so it's important to update your insurance company if you have changed jobs or occupations. Failure to do so may mean any claims made after a job change can be denied by your insurer.

10. Charging for lifts

Some policies specifically exclude cover for car sharing, whether you make profit or not. For



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those whose policies do allow lift sharing, it may be void if you make a profit from giving lifts – many state you may only make enough to cover petrol and driving costs. Earning money from giving lifts can identify you as a ‘taxi hire service’, making a policy which does not cover this void.

It’s important to always read the terms and conditions of your car insurance policy, to ensure that you have not accidentally invalidated the policy. Keep your insurance provider up to date with any change of circumstances, regardless of whether or not you think it’s relevant, as some seemingly unrelated life changes can impact your premium.