

Everyone needs Comprehensive Personal Liability Insurance!

Why?

Sometimes you can unintentionally damage something belonging to someone else, which costs money to repair – sometimes, a lot of money!

It can happen more easily than you think:

The red wine you accidentally spill on a friend's sofa or carpet may leave you liable for the cost of cleaning or replacement. Or a moment of inattention in the kitchen of a student residence that leads to a fire, or the cost of replacing a lost key to a rented room or apartment.

Also there are other more serious costs - If as a pedestrian you cause a serious accident through your own negligence (such as jaywalking), you will be held responsible for the costs. For example – if a child is seriously injured in an accident, you will be liable for compensation for pain and suffering, and perhaps even for support payments for the rest of the child's life. This could amount to millions of Euros over a lifetime.

The damages you may be liable for can be low or high, which is why it is essential to have private general liability insurance to cover these costs.

Who is covered?

There are different insurance policies available:

Single Policy – covers only the person named in the insurance policy

Couples Insurance – covers couple without children - and finally

Family Policy – covers couples with children.

Single policies are cheaper than family policies. Make sure your partner is named on the policy so they are covered with you. The family policy will automatically continue to cover adult unmarried children, who are still studying either at school or in a tertiary educational institution. Students, including international students, should check whether or not they are covered by their parents' private general liability insurance.

What should I look for when choosing private general liability insurance?

The insured amount should not be under 3 million Euros, and the contract should not extend over a period of one year (please note: if you want to cancel your insurance policy and change to another company, you must terminate your old policy THREE MONTHS prior to expiry date). There should be no excess (a smaller amount that you must pay yourself for every claim you make).

Here are some important points you should check before signing an insurance policy:

Make sure the policy includes coverage for damage to rented property (Mietsachschäden) of at least 300 000 Euro. This will cover you for any damage you cause to the apartment/ residence. This is not usually valid for glass breakage or damage to heaters.

You should also check that you have coverage of up to 3 million Euro for gradual loss (Allmählichkeitsschäden). This covers damage caused over time – for example if by drilling a hole in the wall you accidentally hit a water pipe which causes severe damage over a long period of time before it is discovered, this is covered by your insurance policy.

Additionally, there should be an additional option to cover you for the costs incurred by accidentally spreading a virus to another computer, and an option providing coverage for the cost of replacing lost keys to your rental property.

This policy should provide international coverage. Please check the amount and range of the coverage you think you might need. There are other options available to insure yourself against other risks, which will usually have an additional cost.

What is not covered?

There are many exclusions, most importantly deliberate damage to property is not covered. Damage caused by children under the age of 7 is not usually covered by insurance. The insurance company will however pay for damage caused when the child is not or is inadequately supervised.