



Why should I have Insurance?

In taking out insurance you are purchasing 'peace of mind' and financial assistance should you suffer significant loss or claims by clients or employees. Some of the insurances described here apply to all architects while some only apply to those in practice, employing themselves or others.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

Errors will occur at some time during your career and Professional Indemnity Insurance (PI) is mandatory under our Code of Conduct. It provides protection for claims arising out of your professional conduct, advice, negligence, error or omission. The main extensions to PI are:

- Error and Omission and breach of contract through error and omission.
- Reasonable defence costs.
- Loss or damage to documents.
- Dishonesty of an employee during the policy period.
- Defamation, Libel and Slander.

Your broker and the RIAI can advise on appropriate cover for your scale of work and on the need for run-off insurance, should your practice close.

Property Insurance

Property insurance safeguards your property against Fire, Oil/Water Leakage, Storm, Flood, Malicious Damage and other perils and remember- if you are a tenant, you may be responsible for the insurance of the building!

- Have you improved the building? If you have, insure the improvements!
- Ensure that your contents and equipment are insured for their reinstatement value and that laptops and other equipment are covered while away from your office.

Business Interruption Insurance

There are different types of business interruption cover:

- An insurance policy that covers Loss of Income after a disaster, such as a fire, causing partial or total shut-down of the business.
- Many service type businesses opt for cover based on 'Additional Costs of Working'. To arrive at a level of cover, consider the additional costs you may have, such as rent of premises, stationery, advertising, printing, re-construction of drawings or other data, and the time it will take to re-establish the business.

Employers' Liability

This policy pays for claims for damages by an employee suffered in the course of their employment. The premium is calculated on the total wages of your firm. Have you checked the adequacy of the insurance in relation to sub-contractors – other consultants - working on your behalf? In addition, your insurers should always be made aware of such arrangements.

Public Liability

This provides cover in the event of claims by persons other than employees, for example, clients or members of the public, who suffer injury or accidental damage to their property. The prime circumstances where Public Liability Insurance is required are:

- Ownership, or occupation, of property.
- Where you undertake work on someone else's property.
- Events/Exhibitions.
- Contractor/hire of property.

Income Protection - How Can I protect my Income?

What happens if your work life ends sooner than expected? An Income Protection Policy will provide an income if you are unable to work due to illness, injury, accident or disability. Minimum State Illness Benefit pays only €188 per week for a single person but, if you are self-employed, you do not qualify for this! Remember, even if you have a medical condition that you feel might exclude you from cover, that's not necessarily the case. Insurers may offer you cover with an exclusion clause for that condition but covering all other eventualities.

Additional Insurances Available

Other cover available includes:

- Business Travel
- Personal Accident
- Computer and Recompilation of data
- Keyman Insurance
- Partnership Insurance
- Directors and Officers Liability Insurance

These should be discussed with your broker; you may require all or only some of them.

Basic Claim Rules for all Insurances

If you are in difficulty, likely to suffer a claim or have received a solicitor's letter:

- Don't try and deal with the claim yourself. Discuss it with your broker. Quickly pass on any letters from claimants or solicitors to your insurers or broker, without replying to them: the insurers have the resources to deal with claims.
- Never admit or deny liability. Remain empathetic without admitting liability.

Breach of these requirements could entitle your insurer to repudiate or disclaim liability.

Health Safety & Welfare Act 1989

It is compulsory in law to have a Health and Safety Statement covering your premises and your employees working there and out of the office. It will be more difficult to defend a claim if you have not followed the law!

Why use a Broker?

When taking out insurance you should use a broker to ensure:

- Impartiality - a broker is not biased towards or against any particular insurer.
- Independence - a broker is independent and offers advice on the whole market.
- Wide Products Range - a broker has access to a variety of products and so can find the policies most appropriate to your needs.

Mary Robinson

Mary.robinson@nti.ie

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