

THE STEWARD

Trustworthy Insurance Insights for Churches and Ministries

1st Corinthians 8:2 NLT "Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much."

- Preventing Claims & What To Expect If A Claim Is Filed
- Understanding Your Policy And Loss Prevention
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- A Few Frequently Asked Questions About The Claim Process
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Preventing Claims & What To Expect If A Claim Is Filed

Insurance Board

As a leader in your ministry it is important to protect your people, property and to prevent claims. Whether it's clearing debris and making repairs that could prevent a trip and fall hazard, or ensuring that your staff are properly trained and certified to lead transportation efforts, or work with youth. Having policies and protocols in place can assist with preventing claims.

There are also situations that can't be prevented like inclement weather resulting in tornadoes, hail, freezing temperatures, and the like, but there are ways to prepare that can prevent and reduce damage. Our goal is to help you be a more informed leader to prevent claims and to also guide you through the process when a claim must be filed.

At Insurance Board, gone are the days of paper filing your claim. You now can file and report a claim online through our website (www.InsuranceBoard.org/claims/) and you can anticipate follow-up within 48hrs. Before you begin, there are important steps to take before completing the online process. Here is a quick glimpse into the categories of required information that must be provided when submitting a claim.

- General contact information
- General description of what happened
- Property specific questions
- General liability specific questions
- Professional liability questions

In addition to providing standard contact information for your ministry, and the date/time of your claim incident, you will also be asked whether or not you have discussed your claim with your agent. Also make sure to provide as much detail as possible about the loss during the claim process, and if a police report was filed that information will be needed as well. If there were any injuries or medical treatment provided, questions about that will be asked. Make sure to keep track of applicable receipts.



We encourage you to do your part to prevent claims whenever possible by having the proper policies in place. As your partner in ministry, we have a robust claims FAQ page compiling many of the questions you may have. Visit our (www.InsuranceBoard.org/claims/claims-faq/) page for more information and to answer any additional questions you may have. You will also find this form below which will help guide you through the process.

HOW TO SUBMIT A CLAIM

CLAIMS ARE TO BE REPORTED ONLINE THROUGH INSURANCE BOARD'S WEBSITE*
Before you begin, have your Insurance Board number and the details of the loss available. The following are the fields **REQUIRED** to report a claim.

- General & Contact Information**
 - o Loss type
 - o Agent name
 - o Have you discussed claim w/ your agent?
 - o Your first and last name
 - o Date of accident
 - o Church / Organization name
 - o IB Church ID#
 - o City and state of Church / Organization
 - o Did the loss occur at the address above?
 - o Contact person's name, business phone, mobile and email address
- General description of what happened / Details of loss including the building(s) involved.**
 - o Has a police report been completed?
 - o Is it possible that you or anyone else previously reported this claim?
- Property Specific Questions (including Crime and Employee Theft)**
 - o How was it damaged?
 - o Has an estimate been received? (Property); Estimated amount of loss (Crime / Employee Theft)
- General Liability Specific Questions**
 - o Claimant name
 - o If injury occurred, has there been medical treatment?
 - o Was a non-owned or hired vehicle involved?
- Professional Liability Questions**
 - o Attachments (i.e. lawsuit, demand letter, communication regarding demands)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. On the Claims page within the Insurance Board website (<https://www.insuranceboard.org/claims/>), click on the "Report a Claim" button.
2. Select the appropriate Loss Type to get started. Once selected, additional fields will appear depending on the type of claim being submitted.
3. Complete all required and necessary fields, then click "Submit Claim" at the bottom of the screen.

IMPORTANT DETAILS
When your claim is submitted **AND** accepted, you will receive a message indicating your claim has been received. IF YOU DO NOT receive that message, we have not received your claim. After the initial message, you will also receive an email from us within 48 hours.

Claims Contact Information is on the Insurance Board website (<https://www.insuranceboard.org/claims/>).
Cy McFarlin, Director, Claims
Mark Zimmerman, Senior Claims Analyst; Property Claims (Including Crime and Employee Theft)

Understanding Your Policy And Loss Prevention

Insurance Board



Have you ever reported an incident to an insurance company only to get coverage denied and then when you renew your policy at the end of the year, you notice a rate jump due to the claim that you reported, and nothing was even paid out? Understanding your policy is really the first step in avoiding unwanted and unnecessary claims appearing on your loss history that would affect your premium.

No one is going to know your policy better than your agent. When you have an incident that has occurred at your place of worship, it is important to reach out to your agent and discuss the matter prior to filing a claim. Your agent can work with you to gather information and if a claim submission is warranted, file the claim with complete and concise information. Having your agent involved in your claims process only helps to ensure that you have a smooth claims handling experience.

When it comes to professional liability claims (i.e. employment practices liability, directors & officers), your agent also has a complete understanding of occurrence vs claims-made insurance claims.

Occurrence and claims-made insurance policies differ in coverage and are governed by different policies that have different coverage conditions. If you do not report a claims-made claim within certain time parameters noted in your policy, for example, you may end up with coverage issues. If you are unsure whether you have had an incident that is occurrence-based or claims-made, please discuss this with your agent prior to making the decision to file the claim or not.

Any claim involving physical injury that occurred on your property should also be reported to your agent immediately. Slip and falls, as well as other incidents involving a physical injury occurring on your premises is considered an occurrence-based loss. Under that policy, the injured party, regardless of fault, would be entitled up to \$10,000 dollars in medical payment coverage. Reporting occurrence-based slip and falls immediately when they occur to your agent ensures that Insurance Board can assign a representative right away to speak with the injured party and offer the medical payments coverage to assist them with out-of-pocket medical expenses. Within the Insurance industry, it is well known that medical payments coverage helps to control injury claims by assisting injured parties with their out-of-pocket medical expenses up front without delay. Individuals who have their out-of-pocket medical expenses handled often choose to no longer pursue a more costly bodily injury claim.

In any insurance claim scenario, it is imperative to remember that you are insured under the policy and have certain duties and requirements. Speaking with your agent ensures that you meet those requirements, and you are properly managing your organization's risk. As always, keep in mind that Insurance Board and your agent are your partners in protection.

Claims Lessons Learned

Insurance Board

Commercial property damage policies cover damages from a variety of perils ranging from theft to severe weather events. All too often, however, insureds report claims for damages that are caused by normal wear and tear or other maintenance issues, which may not be covered by the insurance policy. Consider this scenario:

One of our church participants notices water damage in the sanctuary ceiling after a heavy rain. They discover that the water is coming from the church roof, which has routinely leaked whenever a storm occurs. The participant contacts the insurance company hoping the policy would cover the repair or replacement of the leaky roof. After the insurance company inspects, they inform the participant that the roof will not be covered – much to the dismay of the participant.

This scenario, unfortunately, occurs quite often especially for participants who have older church buildings. Many property owners erroneously think property insurance will cover anything that is damaged regardless of the cause. However, most property insurance policies will exclude damages that occur because of age and/or deterioration – or wear and tear. In the above example, the policy may only offer limited coverage for the resulting damage to the building's interior, but the leaky roof would not be covered.

Wear and tear damages occur over time and are therefore foreseeable. Insurance protects against *sudden and accidental* damage that is *unforeseeable*, such as a fire. Damages caused by normal wear and tear are inevitable and can be prevented through routine maintenance. A normally functioning roof, for example, is designed to protect the interior from water intrusion during a heavy rainstorm. As roofs age, however, they eventually lose their ability to effectively keep water out.

Often the result, as described in the above scenario, is a leaky roof. And unless there has been sudden damage to the roof from an event such as a hailstorm or severe windstorm, insurance will not cover the cost to repair or replace.

Approximately 44 percent of our property claim denials were attributed to wear and tear causes.

Participants should routinely have their church roofs inspected to identify and repair issues that can arise from normal deterioration.

Seepage is another maintenance issue that can occur over time. Here water slowly enters from the outside because of deterioration of insulating materials. Because this happens gradually, other telltale signs may accompany the damage such as mold, rust and/or corrosion. The claims that are reported from this type of damage usually involve electrical equipment, boilers, and leaky roofs. This type of damage is also excluded by the insurance policy. Therefore, when a claim is subsequently reported, it is often denied in part or completely. Approximately 17 percent of our property claim denials were attributed to damage caused by seepage. Again, routine maintenance is the key to preventing this type of damage and avoiding a potential denial by the insurance company.

Property insurance policies, including those offered by Insurance Board, are designed to protect insureds financially against unforeseen perils that are sudden and accidental. They are not designed to pay for maintenance and upkeep. To avoid having a claim denied, it is important for our participants to understand this difference.

The Value And Importance Of Checklists In Everyday Life

Insurance Board

In a society flooded with technology, complexities, and ever-increasing demands, the simple checklist remains an invaluable tool for streamlining processes, enhancing productivity, and minimizing errors. The checklist has been proven to be a simple but powerful tool that individuals can use in their day-to-day lives to achieve safety, efficiency, and effectiveness. Let's explore the value and reasons why checklists are still necessary in our daily lives.

1. Improves Organization and Structure:

Checklists provide a structured framework for organizing tasks and activities. By breaking down larger goals into smaller actionable items, individuals can manage their responsibilities carefully and systematically. The structure of a checklist not only helps you with prioritizing your tasks, but it also keeps crucial details from slipping through the cracks.

2. Improving Work Quality:

Human memory is fallible and even the most meticulous individual can overlook important tasks or details, especially when you are provided with a short timeline or facing distractions and interruptions. Checklists can serve as a reliable memory aid, serving as a visual reminder of what tasks still need to be completed. They ensure that nothing is forgotten or omitted, thereby reducing the likelihood of rework, errors, and oversights.

3. Enhanced Productivity:

Checklists facilitate a more efficient workflow by providing a clear roadmap of tasks and objectives. Having a checklist in hand, individuals can focus their time and energy on finishing tasks rather than deliberating over what needs to be accomplished.

Agent Corner



John Bouhall, CPCU, is an experienced independent insurance agent in Ohio at Richey-Barrett Insurance serving personal and commercial lines customers. He has been active in the church insurance market for the last 23 years.

Effective loss control measures are essential protections for both insureds and insurance companies. From the individual church's perspective, the proper use and response to proven loss controls mitigates frustration and interruption inherent in dealing with a significant property loss. From the insurance company's perspective, the dollar amount of paid out property losses is lower for claims in which a loss control measure either lessened or prevented property damage.

Ohio is a cold weather state for most of the winter months, as well as some of the fall and spring months. A year ago, a church in northern Ohio experienced water damage due to a frozen pipe burst. The church's insurance through Insurance Board (IB) covered the claim. Up until this inconvenient loss, this church had not installed the cost-effective water sensor monitor system offered through IB. Following this frozen pipe burst water loss, it did so at IB's recommendation. Within the year, the same church experienced two new and separate water events. The first event was a pump leak on a boiler; the second event was a storm sewer back-up in the boiler room. Because the water sensor monitor system provided through IB provided round-the-clock monitoring and automatic email/text alerts to designated church representatives, the damage related to both events was minimized and confined to the boiler room.

Today, the church is happy to have avoided with relative ease what could have been two more extensive water damage losses. IB is happy that its water sensor monitor system is reducing paid out property losses. This is a good example of Partners in Protection, Insurance Board's mission.

The Value And Importance Of Checklists In Everyday Life

Insurance Board

4. Quality Assurance and Consistency:

Consistency is the key to delivering high-quality results, whether in our church lives or personal projects. Checklists serve as a standardized reference point for ensuring tasks are performed consistently and according to predetermined criteria. In many fields such as healthcare, aviation, and risk management, checklists are instrumental in maintaining safety protocols and quality standards.

5. Decision Support:

Checklists can serve as a decision support tool, guiding individuals through complex processes or scenarios. When outlining key considerations and steps to be taken, a checklist will help in navigating unfamiliar situations with clarity and confidence. Whether emergency response protocols or project management frameworks, checklists provide a structured approach to the decision-making process.

6. Accountability and Tracking Progress:

By documenting tasks and tracking completion, checklists foster accountability and transparency. Individuals can monitor their progress, identify challenges, and adjust their plans accordingly. Checklists can also assist in the delegation of tasks within teams, ensuring everyone is aligned and accountable for their portion of the responsibility.

7. Stress Reduction

The mental burden of trying to remember multiple tasks and deadlines can contribute to stress and anxiety. Checklists alleviate this burden by offloading the responsibility of memory onto a tangible tool. By providing a sense of organization and control, a checklist can empower individuals to approach their responsibilities with confidence and poise. A checklist can provide a feeling of accomplishment every time a task is marked complete.

The value of checklists lies in their ability to provide structure, clarity, and efficiency in a variety of contexts. Whether used by professionals in demanding industries or individuals managing daily commitments and life, checklists serve as indispensable allies in traversing the complexities of modern life. By embracing the simplicity and effectiveness of checklists, we can enhance our productivity, mitigate risks, and achieve our goals with greater ease and confidence.

We invite you to visit our webpage to view sample checklists that can help your ministry prevent loss.

www.InsuranceBoard.org/safety-central/

Preventive Maintenance Checklist:

- Consider installing interior motion sensors to be engaged at night or when the building is unoccupied. There should be an alert issued to a responsible church party if there is motion detected.
- The condition of any path should be monitored for changing conditions that include foreign substances (that can be a slip hazard) or defects (worn carpeting, rolled mats). These items should be addressed immediately.
- Interior lighting needs to provide illumination to all areas of the church where people have access. A routine inspection by church staff and professional inspection/maintenance are important to provide appropriate lighting to all areas of the church interior.
- Emergency lighting (interior lighting that illuminates exit signs and provides battery back-up powered lighting in case of an emergency and loss of utility power) can provide safe movement within a property during a time of emergency.
- Signs can be required by law or used to inform and warn anyone that has access to a property. Local authorities and laws should be reviewed to make sure all signage is in compliance with any legal codes.
- Elevators are a unique risk as there are state specific laws regarding the installation and operation of the lifts. An elevator professional should be consulted on the installation and maintenance of any elevator.
- An appropriate contract should be obtained with an elevator maintenance company to provide scheduled and routine inspection/maintenance of the equipment. Church staff can check the elevator routinely and keep a record of all maintenance (and a calendar of routine inspection needs).
- Connect with local authorities (FEMA, local police and fire, and city officials) to determine their emergency/security plans might be for various threats and work together to prepare your strategy.
- Gather intelligence by working with community officials to learn about emerging risks for your area and to help develop a plan for preventing your facility from being a target.
- Easily accessible objects around the church that could be used to breach the building should be considered for removal; this would include such items as benches, bricks, easily thrown stones, or ladders.
- Protect your interior property by checking tenant spaces for maintenance and hazards, and ensure they have the proper insurance to cover any damage to church property.
- Take a video inventory of your church, its current condition, and all of the assets.
- Develop systems to temporarily move the business operation of the church; include access to important documents, including insurance policies, contracts, etc.



Our insurance serves you so you can serve God.
Serve God

A Few Frequently Asked Questions About The Claim Process

Insurance Board

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER I SUBMIT MY CLAIM?

Within 48 hours of filing your claim you will receive an email confirmation of that claim. You will then be contacted by an adjuster. The adjuster will go through an initial contact with you, and will answer your questions about the claim, and the process moving forward. In addition, we will be there to assist you every step of the way. A member of Insurance Board will be available throughout the claims process until everything is completely resolved.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP SETTLE MY PROPERTY CLAIM QUICKLY?

If you get estimates right away, that will help. Generally, three estimates by qualified contractors will suffice when your building is damaged along with taking photos and documenting the damages.

WHAT SHOULD I NOT DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CLAIM?

Do not delay reporting while collecting information about an accident, injury or claim. Do not assume any obligation, make a payment, settlement, or incur expense, other than necessary first aid or emergency repairs, without the insurance carrier's consent, except at your own cost. Do not make statements along the lines of: "We'll take care of it for you." Let the person know that you will contact your insurance company and a representative from that company will be in touch. And, do not do anything after an incident occurs that would interfere with the right to recover from others. Along with not providing statements, written or oral, except if it is the proper legal authorities, or authorized representative of the Insurance Board.

[Download our Risk Control Guide For Ministries to help your ministry avoid claims.](#)



Risk Control Guide For Ministries Table of Contents

Our insurance serves you so you can serve God
Serve God

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In summary, it is important to protect your people, property, and to prevent claims. Utilizing the resources provided in this issue of The Steward can assist you. If you have additional questions about a claim remember to contact your agent, or you can contact Insurance Board by visiting our webpage at: www.InsuranceBoard.org

This communication, along with any attachment, does not amend, extend or alter the coverage terms, exclusions, and conditions of insurance policies referenced herein. Policy language is controlling and supersedes. Guidance provided by the Insurance Board does not constitute legal advice; please seek the advice of an attorney if you wish to obtain legal advice.



INSURANCE BOARD

Partners in Protection



CEO CORNER

TIMOTHY S. HARRIS, CPCU

PRESIDENT AND CEO

Climate Change is real. Let's just say that I don't need convincing; Insurance Board is paying the costs of increased severe weather events every year. And, year over year, these costs have grown precipitously. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), there were 28 separate, billion-dollar weather events in 2023 (inflation adjusted); the most billion-dollar events since the more than 40 years of keeping such records. The highest total prior to that was 22 events in 2020.

While not all insurance claims due to weather-related events can be eliminated, many claims (property and liability alike) are the result of, or exacerbated by, the actions or inactions of people. Individuals make decisions not to maintain their properties, such as repairing roofs or leaky infrastructure, which results in millions of dollars of additional damage each year. Individuals make decisions not to implement or adhere to appropriate checks and balances to avoid theft claims at churches (employee dishonesty, embezzlement, and social engineering claims are on the rise at churches and affiliated ministries). Individuals make decisions not to require facility use agreements for third party usage of church property, resulting in claims for which the church, or the church's insurer, becomes responsible. Individuals make decisions not to appropriately supervise employees

or volunteers resulting in abuse claims. Individuals make decisions not to follow requisite procedures when hiring or terminating employees, resulting in costly insurance litigation. Oftentimes, churches not maintaining their facilities lack internal controls in other areas. These actions or failures to act have considerable financial consequences, and these financial consequences, coupled with the increasing incidence of severe weather, are resulting in higher insurance premiums and higher insurance deductibles imposed by insurers.

I have stated this before, but churches have the most control over the claims that occur at their facilities. We are called in response to claims after they happen; we don't cause them. Again, not all claims are preventable, but as climate inspired weather events continue to increase, those churches investing in their ministries through regular maintenance and repair and adhering to best practices, will find themselves best positioned to obtain the most favorable insurance pricing and coverage. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is a proverb that continues its relevance today, and this edition of *The Steward* highlights things that church personnel can do to prevent claims, including the use of checklists to identify issues and improve efficacy. Insurance Board makes available several checklist resources, as well as many others, on its website under www.insuranceboard.org/safety-central/.