

IIABA and TRUSTED CHOICE® TIPS FOR TRAVELING WITH HOLIDAY GIFTS

There's a lot going on during the holiday season, and many people may not be taking the time to make the right decisions about traveling with extra baggage: valuable gifts. Here are a few things to think about....

- **SHIP OR PACK?** It depends. Your homeowners policy can kick in to help you if you lose your stuff whether you ship it ahead to your destination or pack it along with you. But if you ship your packages, go ahead and purchase the insurance your shipper offers. It's usually very reasonable and gives you an extra layer of protection. Consider this: your lost goods may not be valued higher than your deductible, which for many homeowners is \$500 or \$1000, so you'd pay out of pocket in those cases.

If you pack the gifts in your baggage...watch the weight! Airlines have become more stringent on weight limitations recently. Even a few pounds over can cost you dearly. If you lose your gifts in checked baggage, you may have a better chance of reaching your homeowners' deductible for this loss because you've probably lost a suitcase as well. That can add even a couple hundred dollars to a claim. Also—typically, when baggage is lost, the airline would reimburse for at least some of the loss, and the credit card you purchased the ticket with will often offer some level of protection automatically as well.

- **WHAT ARE YOUR GIFTS?** Remember that your homeowners policy does have some restrictions and exclusions. It typically will NOT cover collectibles (such as certain figurines, fine china, baseball cards, etc), antiques, fine jewelry, or artwork, for example. These can be popular gift items, so if you are traveling with or shipping this sort of thing, ask about what additional coverage might be needed.
- **WHERE ARE YOU GOING?** *Some* insurance policies have territorial restrictions if you are traveling with belongings far overseas or if you are away for an extended time. Talk to your agent before you go, particularly if you are traveling with many valuables.
- **CHECK-IN OR CARRY-ON?** You might feel more secure traveling with your most valuable gifts (such as electronic gadgets, cameras, jewelry) in your carry-on, but is that really the best decision?? Think about how often you are actually away from your carry-on bag. Do you really take it with you to the on-board lavatory? Do you put it on the floor behind you when you are grabbing your bags off the luggage carousel? Can you be sure no one else is taking it from the overhead bin in the rush to get off the plane? Might you leave it behind by accident in a rushed trip to the snack machine or bathroom during an airport layover? It might not seem so, but it's probably better risk management to ship it or pack and check it.

- **DON'T BUY BAGGAGE INSURANCE!** You probably don't need it. If you have a good homeowners or renters policy, your stuff is most likely covered. In addition, the airline and your credit card will likely cover lost items too. Don't waste your money on this specialty coverage.
- **WHEN IN DOUBT...ASK.** Consult with your insurance agent before you travel. Inquire about your policy, its limits, and exclusions. Let your agent know what you are traveling with, where you are going, and find out what might be the best option for you. It's a quick call and provides peace of mind at a busy time.

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