

Before saying 'yes' to a loan, be sure to see your professional insurance agent

I'm about to make a major purchase that requires financing. Should I speak to my insurance agent?

Absolutely. If you are considering taking out a loan to buy a home, a new car, start your own business or some other costly venture, be sure to see us before signing on the dotted line; even acting as a cosigner could have important insurance implications. Our expertise could help you avoid costly mistakes and keep your insurance options open.

We can advise you on the best coverage. In New Jersey, some financial institutions are licensed to sell insurance products. As your insurance adviser, we can help you get the best coverage for your purchase and help you stay clear of pressure to buy their insurance policies.

Can a bank force me to buy insurance?

In order to grant a loan for a large purchase, such as a home, a car or a business, a lender can require their customer to purchase insurance from any particular producer or insurance company. In fact, a lender is required to notify borrowers of their right to purchase insurance through independent sources.

A bank must accept a client's own insurance policy, except in unusual cases where there is some reasonable basis to reject the policy. Despite these safeguards, national consumer surveys show that borrowers often find they must buy coverage from the bank to get a loan—**not true!** If an insurance policy is rejected, the bank must provide a clearly written statement.

In addition, financial institutions cannot charge a fee for handling a borrower's insurance policy unless it is a requirement.

Why mortgage insurance coverage is not required

A mortgage cannot be purchased by a borrower without fire insurance coverage in excess of the replacement value of the structure. (In the past, some lenders required borrowers to carry excess amounts of insurance. Now, the state protects homeowners from unreasonable insurance requirements.) Also, a lender cannot require the borrower to buy credit insurance.

Tie-in sales are illegal

Be aware that requiring a person to purchase insurance before making a decision on your application for credit is illegal. This is sometimes called a tie-in sale. Tie-ins are strictly prohibited by state law.

What is forced placement?

Other lenders may try to watch out for themselves by calling "forced placement." Lenders may require a borrower to buy an insurance policy on the lender's behalf. Or, lenders may buy a policy and bill the borrower later. Often, these policies provide inferior coverage at higher premiums than are available elsewhere!

Lenders "force place" when they don't receive satisfactory proof that your insurance is being maintained. Be sure to relay any lender requirements or inquiries to your agent—many "forced placement" actions are the result of poor communication or lender mistakes.

Call us first

If you are considering buying a home, car or business, be sure to contact us, your professional, independent insurance agent first. Our agency can help you select the best insurance option from a variety of insurance companies and products.

