



Travel Insurance:

Embarking on Unusual Exploits



Increasingly affordable travel has made the prospect of venturing out of one's comfort zone to far-flung corners of the world a reality. It is not uncommon today for a growing number of Singaporeans to journey to the corners of the earth that were considered exotic a few years ago.

Some Singaporeans are also venturing into the realm of recreational activities traditionally perceived as involving a high degree of risk, not to mention high-altitude hiking and kayaking in rapids, among a growing list of other activities.

Then, there are those who plan to travel, with a pre-existing medical condition. While one may have this covered by one's health insurance policy, it may not necessarily be covered by the travel insurance policy. In this instance, a bit more legwork is required and usually comes with an additional premium as insurers seek to increasingly address customer needs.

Despite the growing interest for such fun-filled exploits, travel insurance remains a constant. It is essential to safeguard one against unforeseen circumstances when embarking on these pursuits. It provides peace of mind should things go wrong, and offers recourse and protection against inconveniences.

Start with the Basics

There are plenty of what-ifs that could derail one's holiday or adventure plans. Here are some useful reminders ahead of such a trip.



Buy insurance even for short-haul trips:

Even before you leave home for your overseas travel, unexpected events can happen such as your travel agent becoming insolvent. Protect yourself from being caught unprepared, even on short trips to nearby destinations.



Know your benefits:

Standard travel insurance policies cover unforeseen events and unexpected financial expenses that might be incurred during your travel.



Most insurance policies are different:

Recent experiences showed that travellers are increasingly exposed to severe weather events, disease outbreaks and socio-political uncertainties. Such developments are becoming more common these days and travellers need to ascertain that their plan covers these new emerging risks.



Travel and Health insurance are different:

Travel insurance protects customers against unexpected events when one is overseas. As rule of thumb, pre-existing medical conditions are generally not covered under travel insurance. Health insurance, however, protects against medical conditions that customers may have, including pre-existing conditions. Check with your insurer if pre-existing conditions are covered under your policy prior to purchase, if not, address the need by speaking with your insurer.

Know What You Need In A Policy



Consider your needs and expectations when choosing a travel insurance policy. Ask yourself the following questions when deciding what you need:

- 1 How frequently do you travel?
- 2 Where are you travelling to?
- 3 What is the purpose of your trip?
- 4 Do you travel alone or with your family?
- 5 What is your itinerary?
- 6 What is your budget?
- 7 What are your personal expectations of the cover? Do you require coverage for emergency assistance, evacuation, delayed departure, etc?

I am taking a vacation to a far-flung place. I am thinking of doing something adventurous. Can I get coverage?

Depending on specific terms and conditions, a standard travel plan does not provide coverage to exotic locations as these locations generally pose higher risks.

Likewise, jumping out of a plane with a parachute can be immensely exciting, but it also carries risks.

As in special cases, travellers are encouraged to speak to their insurer to discuss the risks involved and secure the necessary coverage.

Do travel plans cover my pre-existing illness?

Pre-existing medical conditions like asthma and high blood pressure are typically not covered by standard travel insurance plans. This does not mean that you cannot take out travel insurance. It simply means that any claim arising from, or related to that condition will not be covered.

You can approach your insurer to have this risk covered, on a case-by-case basis, at a separate cost.

Know The Benefits Of A Policy



Travel insurance offers a wide range of benefits to protect you against injury and financial losses arising from fortuitous events. These benefits vary depending on the insurer and kind of policy in terms of limits, definition and insured risks.

Comprehensive travel insurance policies typically offer the following benefits:

- 1 **Personal accident** Covers accidental injuries that result in death or permanent total disablement.
- 2 **Medical expenses** Reimburses the cost of medical treatments while you are overseas, and follow-up treatments when you return to Singapore.
- 3 **Trip cancellation & curtailment** Compensates you on the non-refundable and irrecoverable portions of prepaid travel expenses, subject to the insured risks of your policy.
- 4 **Travel delay** Pays you cash benefit usually in every block of X hours of delay in the departure of a scheduled public transportation, subject to the insured risks of your policy.
- 5 **Emergency medical evacuation** Reimburses the cost of transportation incurred while overseas as a result of a serious injury or sickness.

How To Make A Claim

Different insurers often have different claims procedures. You can refer to your insurer's website to find out more about the type of documents to submit for each individual benefit. Some insurance companies have mobile applications where you could download to check on the relevant documents for claims submission.

To support your travel claim, providing the necessary documentary evidence is important. Very often, the insurer will require copies of the airline ticket, police report, medical bills and report, carrier irregularities report and original purchase receipt, etc. You can refer to the policy contract or contact your insurer for more details.

