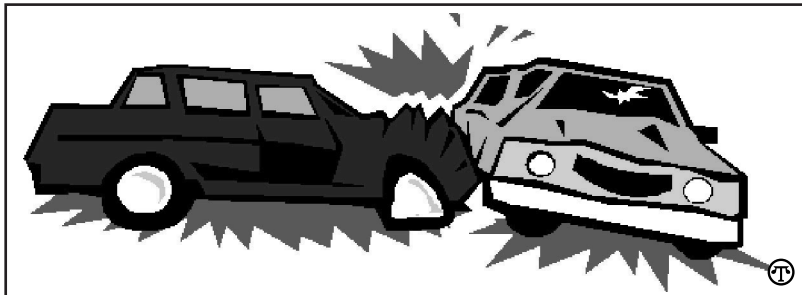


SAFETY SENSE

Don't Become A Victim of Staged Auto Accidents



STAGED ACCIDENTS and phony claims could cost motorists as much as \$300 in additional premiums each year.

(NAPSA)—In light of the growing number of auto insurance fraud-related arrests around the country, here's a crash course on how to spot staged accidents and other fraudulent activities related to phony auto claims.

First, know that staging accidents, providing unnecessary medical treatments for faked injuries and counterfeit medical mills are all illegal.

Here are some tips for drivers from GEICO investigators to help you stay alert:

- If you have an accident, be sure to call the police to the scene. Beware of anyone who is anxious to leave quickly before police arrive.
- Record names, addresses, license plate numbers, witness information, and any other facts you think might be important.
- Keep a disposable camera in your vehicle to take photos of the vehicles involved and the accident scene.
- Do not tailgate—criminals will brake unexpectedly in front of tailgaters to intentionally cause an accident. Look out for vehicles that brake suddenly for no apparent reason.
- Look out for large, older

vehicles with three or more occupants. Criminals often crowd into old cars when looking to stage an accident.

- Count and record the number of occupants in each involved vehicle.
- If you suspect an accident has been staged or another type of fraud related to an auto accident, notify the police.
- Contact the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) at www.nicb.org or (800) TEL-NICB to report suspected fraud.
- Contact GEICO via the company's Web site to report fraud: www.geico.com/auto/claims/fraud/investigation.htm.

According to the NICB, insurance fraud could cost drivers up to as much as \$300 in additional premiums each year.

Seth Ingall, vice president of GEICO's claims division, said, "We are proud to be part of several industrywide and state task forces that uncover fraud. The task forces are pursuing leads on those staging accidents, running phony medical mills, billing for nonexistent procedures, inflating medical fees and taking advantage of the public."