

Saving Money

Hit-And-Run Accidents Can Hit Insured Drivers By Surprise

(NAPSA)—Nationwide, one in every eight accidents is a hit-and-run. According to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 80 percent of hit-and-run accidents cause vehicle damage only. Therefore, the victim's largest expenses are usually for repairs and a replacement rental car.

"Unfortunately, many drivers are unprepared for the consequences of becoming the victim of a hit-and-run crash when the other driver cannot be identified," said Steve Cox, vice president of the Council of Better Business Bureaus. "Instead of the at-fault driver's auto insurance policy covering the victim's costs for medical expenses, vehicle repairs and a replacement rental car, it ends up being the victim's responsibility to pay the deductible, as well as all other expenses."

The Insurance Information Institute, a nonprofit consumer education organization, says consumers can protect themselves from the financial consequences of a hit-and-run accident by having the following coverages on their auto insurance policies:

- **Uninsured Motorist Coverage.** Not being able to identify the other driver is the same as being involved in an accident with an uninsured driver. But uninsured motorist coverage, which pays for injury and damages caused by an uninsured or hit-and-run driver, is not obligatory in every state. Therefore, some insured drivers are not covered.

- **Replacement Rental Car Coverage.** Some auto insurance



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companies do not automatically cover the cost of a temporary replacement rental car while a car is being repaired, even if the damage was caused by a hit-and-run driver. Most cars are in a repair shop for two weeks after an accident. Considering that the average daily rate for a rental car is \$50, it can end up costing more for a one-day rental car than for one full year's coverage for replacement rental car coverage, which is only a couple of dollars a month.

"Many of us think that we're well prepared to deal with an accident, but people often don't take the time to read and understand their policy," says Carolyn Gorman, vice president of the Insurance Information Institute. "Most policies are very specific and provide detailed explanations about what is automatically included and what additional low-cost options are available."

More information is available at www.wiserdrivers.com.