

# **Should I insure my photographic equipment & laptop for use as a professional?**

This is always the most difficult question to answer but as long as you remember the most important insurance to have is Public Liability and then Professional Indemnity you should be ok.

Some photographers feel that the equipment is their “life blood” and they couldn’t do without it so for them then insurance is the most sensible solution. It means they have some “hiring in costs” should the worst happen and they need equipment to continue with work commitments whilst any claim is being considered.

## **Keeping clear of the Averaging Clause**

There are important things to think about when covering equipment for example making sure you insure **ALL** of it. All insurers operate a system called “averaging”. This means that if you have a total loss claim and you have not insured all your equipment, then you will only get a proportion of the value back. For example, if you have £10,000 worth of equipment and only insure ½ of it – say £5,000 then under the averaging clause you should not expect to receive more than ½ of your claim back - £2,500. This is something that is not unique in just the photographic market so look out for it. If you have equipment that you don’t want to insure as you don’t use it and you feel it has no value then try and get rid of it – maybe on ebay. If you are keeping it as a back up then you should be insuring it just in case.

## **Listing equipment**

Another way to ensure you don’t fall foul of the “averaging” clause is to list every item you insure. This means if you have a total loss, then the items on the list will be paid for at the values you have specified. The downside to this is if you have bought a new piece of equipment and not yet notified insurers of it, it will probably not be covered. When you insure your equipment, make sure you list any item over £1,000 with the insurance company. It is wise to let them know the make, model, serial number and replacement cost from the beginning then there should be no quibbling over value. In some cases, if you are going to be abroad for a while, and not be replacing equipment it is probably worth giving them a complete list. That way, if anything happens whilst you’re abroad, they have all the details to hand.

## **Laptops**

I advise you list photographic equipment slightly differently from computer related stuff but always list laptops even if they are under the minimum amount! These are likely to be the most common item that gets stolen.

## **New for Old cover**

All Insurers who provide cover for professional photographers should offer new for old cover. After all, the equipment is important to you and should the worst happen, then you will want replacement equipment. This is no good if you are insured on a 2<sup>nd</sup> hand basis! Always make sure you insure your equipment to replace, as new, should

the worst happen – and make sure the insurers are quoting on a new for old basis – if not, walk away! After all, it is lovely to have a Canon 5D that you paid £500 but it would cost you around triple to replace and Insurers aren't going to hunt around for a 2<sup>nd</sup> hand one at the value you paid so you could end up losing out!

### **Adding cover to a Household policy**

A large number of photographers tend to try and add their equipment onto a household policy. It is really important, that if you do this you realise should you have a claim this will affect your Contents cover renewal and you need to ensure that the Insurer knows exactly what is being covered, values of equipment and the fact you are using it professionally. Don't just take a customer service advisor's "yes" over the phone – if it isn't a specific photographic insurer get it in writing! It is also important to get answers to the right questions – are they covering you in unattended vehicles? What about late into the evening? With professional cover starting at around £100 with Aaduki it makes sense to ensure your current policy really is fit for purpose...

### **Where is the cover provided?**

You can cover all your photographic / video making equipment, lighting, computer and film processing too! Cover is offered in the UK and Eire as standard and up to 60 days worldwide cover is provided with more available on request. Some insurers only go to 45 days so watch out! Alternatively, at Aaduki we have an insurer who will offer unlimited worldwide cover and you can call us to find out more on this.

### **What are the most important things to remember when I insure my equipment?**

These are a few simple steps to remember – trying to stick to this should help you in managing your business:

- 1) Always act as if you have no insurance. That way, you are less likely to have a claim.
- 2) List all items over £1,000 to replace with serial, make and model and replacement cost and give this list to the Insurers.
- 3) **Never** under insure! It is ok to be slightly over, but never be under on your replacement costs.
- 4) Keep a list of all equipment you own and update it regularly. This will help if you need to make a claim.
- 5) **Never** assume you are covered on your household policy unless you have it in writing from your insure and they are fully aware of the equipment you have and the fact that you are using it for professional purposes.

By remembering these few steps, hopefully you will have a quicker response in the event of you having to make a claim. Remember, insurance can sometimes be a necessary evil...

Nik Stewert