Insurance ViewPoint

An Insurance Break You’ve Probably Never Heard Of

Utah law requires a driver to carry at least $3,000 of medical coverage that will kick in immediately, regardless of who caused the accident. This lets injured parties get help without medical providers fretting about who’ll foot the bill. Ditto for funeral expenses.

Another part of that insurance package covers loss of income if you’re unable to return to work and thereby lose wages.

But whoa! What if you’re retired or unemployed and have no wages? Did you know you can eliminate this coverage and save yourself its cost on your no-fault premium? You could qualify if you’ve received no earned income during the 31 days before and 180 days after applying to eliminate this feature.

To learn more about canceling this coverage, call your agent. After all, if it doesn’t apply to you, why pay for it?

First in a Series

URS Website: New Look, New Features

If you haven’t visited www.urs.org recently, you don’t know what you’ve been missing. The newly redesigned website has a fresh face and new, user-friendly tools.

This is the first in a brief series to help you become more familiar with the new site and its many useful features. We’ll start by showing you how to monitor and analyze the performance of URS funds.

You can:
• Chart the performance of URS funds as far back as four years.
• Plot overlapping charts to visually compare different funds.
• Download your fund’s daily performance for the past four years.

How to do it.

Click on “Daily Unit Values” in the lower left corner of the home page. A table of investment options will appear. Click on any of them to see a graph showing its performance and to access other information. The chart below shows what you’ll see.

1. Description of investment option.
2. Click any option to compare performance.
3. Each option appears as a color-coded line.
4. Adjust markers to alter timeline.
5. Type in dates for a custom time period.
6. Preset buttons give 10-day to four-year views.

This example shows how the performance of the Large Stock Value Fund compares with that of the Large Stock Index and Large Cap Stock Growth from May 3, 2010, to May 3, 2011.
Money ViewPoint

Book Now for Credit Theft Travel

Your credit card statement has finally arrived, and... “Whoa—what's this? I didn’t buy a $4,000 set of chrome wheels while I was in Chicago!”

When you’re traveling, beware. Credit hackers love the hotel industry because electronic security is notoriously lax. Hackers can grab your data, run up charges, then vanish, all while you’re traveling and unaware of what’s happening. Defense: monitor your credit card statement, if you can, while you’re on the road or immediately when you return.
— From The NY Times

Like salt and sugar

Living Will? Living Trust? What’s the Difference?

A reader writes: “Can you please tell me the difference between a living trust and a living will?”

A living trust and a living will are as different as salt and sugar. You may want to have both of them, but despite certain similarities you shouldn’t mistake one for the other. Here’s the diff:

• A living will is a document wherein you state your health-care decisions in advance, such as whether or not to remain on artificial life support should you become incapacitated and are unable to make your wishes known.

• A (revocable) living trust is a legal instrument you create to which you transfer property during your lifetime to avoid probate.

Useful Websites

Summer is moving time, whether to college or to a new neighborhood. Visit www.movers-edge.com and learn how to organize your move on a four-week countdown schedule.

Deal of the day: Check freebies and discounts on whatever deal comes around. www.walletpop.com/category/bargain-babe.

Retirement Office ViewPoint

Returning to Work? Here’s How to Do It Right.

Retirement is coming up, but your employer would like you to come back to work afterwards. Can you still retire and afterward return to work for a URS participating employer? Absolutely, but you’ll need to know the new rules.

Returning within one year

You must separate from employment (including part-time and contract arrangements) with all URS participating employers for one year following your retirement date with URS — with the following exceptions:

1. You receive no employer provided benefits, including but not limited to: medical, dental, paid time off, annual leave, sick leave, or other benefits, excluding workers’ compensation;

2. Your salary is limited to the lesser of $15,000 or half of your final average monthly salary in a calendar year. If you exceed the earnings’ limitation or receive benefits, your retirement allowance will be canceled.

When you terminate your post-retirement employment, the termination date becomes your new retirement date for calculating your separation requirement under post-retirement rules.

Social Security or Medicare

Who You Gonna Call — Social Security or Medicare?

One day you realize you’re thinking about retirement. Don’t worry if you’re not there yet. The eventual barrage of mail will remind you just fine. But let’s say you need answers now to some Medicare questions. Should you call Social Security or Medicare? (This is not a trick question.)

Social Security has the duty of:

1. determining whether you’re eligible for Medicare;

2. signs you up for Part A or B;

3. collects the premiums for Parts A (when needed), B, and D.

If you’re employed by a URS employer within 60 days of your URS retirement date, your retirement allowance will be canceled and you’ll be returned to active status to earn additional service credit, if you’re eligible for service credit accrual.

Returning after one year

If you’re re-employed with a URS employer after one year from your URS retirement date, you may choose to:

1. Earn a salary and continue to receive your retirement allowance; or

2. Earn a salary and cancel your retirement allowance in order to earn additional service credit.

If you’re re-employed for at least two years, we’ll calculate a separate benefit to reflect your new service and salary at the time of your second retirement. Your original retirement benefit and the new benefit will be combined.

Start right here

If you’re planning to be re-employed by a URS employer, call us at 801-366-7770 or 800-695-4877 before you begin this employment. You’ll need to file a Post-Retirement Employment form (RTRT-27a) with us before you start work. You can find this form at www.urs.org under “Forms” or ask us to send it to you.

Eleven plus two: When you rearrange these letters you get Twelve plus one. Now count the letters.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid is responsible for the administration of Medicare. Both agencies have websites (www.socialsecurity.gov and www.medicare.gov) where you can begin your quest for answers.

If you’re in your 60s, it will pay to spend some time reviewing your coming Medicare choices and how they may affect your healthcare expectations.

— Information supplied by Mickie Douglas, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist Salt Lake City, UT
How Consolidation and Rollovers Can Simplify Your Future

In addition to the URS defined benefit pension plan, you and your employer may also be contributing to a URS 401(k), 457, Roth or Traditional IRA. Each plan offers different tax advantages and withdrawal options. The 401(k) and 457 are tax-deferred accounts; the Roth is an advantageous after-tax account.

You may assume contributions are the only way to add to your URS retirement savings. Actually, participation in URS’ Savings Plans allows you to consolidate retirement plans from previous employers, such as 401(k), 457, 403(b), and certain other retirement assets into URS accounts. Look at the benefits of consolidating your accounts:

- Low investment and plan fees
- High quality investment management
- Increased availability for loans
- Simplify your investment decisions

Organize your affairs for your beneficiaries

Full service brokerage with Charles Schwab (if you’re interested in actively participating in the open securities market)

Protection from creditors — your retirement savings plans are generally protected from bankruptcy and most other legal actions.

If you want to pursue consolidating your accounts, complete a savings plan transfer form and submit it to URS along with a copy of your previous plan(s) statement. URS will contact the previous company requesting the funds to be rolled over. It’s that easy. Locate this form online at https://www.urs.org/Forms/dclrl-1.pdf or call us at 801-366-7720 or 800-753-7445.

4 “Musts” if You’re Thinking About a Gym Membership

Here are 4 things you must know:

1. What does the gym mean by “free”? One example:
   If you’re offered a “free” one-month trial membership, will you have to officially cancel your trial membership to keep from being billed month after month? Ask more about “free.” It can be a slippery word.

2. Visit the gym at the times you’d normally be using it to see how crowded it is.

3. Don’t sign up on the spot. Instead, take the agreement home with you and read it when you’re not under pressure.

4. Think twice if you’re being leaned on to pay a full year’s dues up front. This may be a sign the gym has financial stresses. Also, once you’ve shelled out for a year’s membership, you’ve committed yourself, regardless of your later satisfaction, a change in plans, health, or other issue.

—NY Times

Watermelon’s Big Surprise

Summer’s here and so’s the watermelon. Healthy? You bet. Watermelon contains 40% more Lycopene than fresh tomatoes. Lycopene is a potent antioxidant that strengthens the immune system and may lower the risk for certain cancers.

Hint: Once home, leave the melon on the counter after cutting it open. Ambient temperatures allow watermelon to produce up to 40% more lycopene and 130% more beta-carotene than cold watermelon.

SNEAK PREVIEW!

Watch your mailbox in June and you’ll see changes to the Horizon Funds and the Index Fund that will add diversification and depth.

Now, Invest in the Whole World

In March URS made exciting changes to the International Fund. The fund was moved from an actively managed fund to an index fund based on the MSCI All Country World Index — excluding U.S. — Investable Market Index (ACWI ex. U.S. IMI). The new structure adds exposure to emerging markets and small cap international stocks, while reducing management fees. Learn more? Check the International Fund fact sheet at https://www.urs.org/Pdf/FactSheets/international.pdf.

Raging Bulls

Examine the 33 bull markets since 1900 and you’ll note that 14 of them lasted 2 years or more with an average return of 43.6%. Not bad. But the current (thru 3/2011) bull market’s average is 86.7%! Only two bull markets did better: the bull of the 1920s at 148.2% and the bull of the 1990s at 197.7%.

If you didn’t panic in 2008 and pull your money out, you’d be approaching a near doubling of your investments today.

— Hulbert Financial Digest

Organize Your Life, Your Future — Yourself

The Retirement Office offers two popular planning brochures:

1. Record of Important Papers and Valuable Property guides your executor or family to the critical papers, properties, and obligations of your estate. This is also useful as your own personal guide to the location of your papers.

2. Suddenly Single details the essential legal and financial steps one must take during the first days and weeks after the death of a spouse.

Order by calling 801-366-7372 or toll free 800-753-7372.
HB 90: Board of Pardons Amendments — Clarifies that a member of the Board of Pardons will participate in the public safety retirement system.

SB 112: Retirement System Divestment — Prohibits URS from making any future direct investments in foreign companies that have a significant presence in the Iranian energy business.

SB 127: Post-Retirement Employment Amendments — Allows a retiree to return to part-time employment with a participating employer after a 60-day break in service if the retiree does not receive any employer paid benefit or does not earn more than the lesser of $15,000 or one half of his or her final average salary annually. Such employment restarts the required one year separation from retirement before full time employment can begin.

Sub. SB 308: Amendments to Public Employees’ Benefit and Insurance Program — This technical amendment bill clarifies portions of the Tier 1 program and makes changes to the Tier 2 program before it becomes effective July 1, 2011.

- Addresses the timing of the receipt of death or spousal benefits under Tier 1 to make provisions in the Act consistent.
- Clarifies that full-time elected officials would not be subject to post-retirement restrictions, and that all newly elected officials would be eligible only for the Tier 2 defined contribution plan.
- Allows employers who were not participating in Social Security to pay substitute payments to post-retired employees and not violate post-retirement restrictions.

THE HUMBLE PAPER CLIP... was patented November 9, 1899, by William D. Middlebrook. In 112 years no one has created a more efficient way to hold loose sheets of paper.