

Valentine's Day Jewelry Sales Expected to Exceed \$4 Billion this Year; Make Sure Your Token of Love Is Properly Insured

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NEW YORK, February 12, 2013 "Love may be priceless, but if your special someone gives you an expensive piece of jewelry on Valentine's Day, it is important that the item be properly insured, according to the Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.).

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Valentine's Day remains one of the biggest gift-giving holidays and the National Retail Federation estimates that related sales of jewelry and watches will increase 7 percent this year to an estimated 4.4 billion dollars.

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"The word 'insurance' is likely not going to be on many lovers lips this Valentine's Day, but if an expensive gift of jewelry is lost or stolen it can certainly make a bad situation a little better," said Jeanne Salvatore, senior vice president and consumer spokesperson for the I.I.I. "While there is no way to insure the sentimental value of jewelry, at least having it properly insured will provide financial protection in the event it is lost or stolen," she continued.

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Most standard homeowners and renters insurance policies include coverage for personal items such as jewelry; however, many policies limit the dollar amount for the *theft* of personal possessions such as jewelry

to \$1,000 to \$2,000. So, you would be covered if the item were destroyed by disasters listed in the policy such as a fire or hurricane, but if your expensive new present is lost or stolen you would need separate insurance, pointed out the I.I.I.

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To properly insure jewelry, consider purchasing additional coverage through a floater or an endorsement. In most cases, these policy add-ons would also cover you for "mysterious disappearance." This means that if your ring falls off your finger and is flushed down a drain, or is lost, you would be financially protected. Floaters and endorsements carry no deductibles and frequently provide the option of having the insurance company replace the item for you.

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Floaters and endorsements are available as additions to homeowners and renters insurance policies. Some companies also offer a stand-alone policy to cover jewelry without having to purchase a full homeowners or renters insurance policy.

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"Of course, if you do not have insurance on your home or apartment, now would be a great time to consider it," noted Salvatore. A 2012 Insurance Information Institute poll conducted by ORC International found that 96 percent of homeowners had homeowners insurance but only 31 percent of renters had renters insurance.

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"In many of my conversations with consumers, the purchase of an engagement ring triggers interest in getting a renters insurance for the first time as many (especially young) people start to think more seriously about financially protecting themselves with insurance," said Salvatore.

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It is worth noting that jewelry-related losses were the most frequently claimed item, according to research by Enservio, an inventory service firm.

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To make sure your jewelry is adequately protected, the I.I.I. suggests the following four steps:

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First, contact your insurance professional immediately.

Let your insurance professional know that you are now in possession of an expensive piece of jewelry. Find out how much coverage you have and whether additional insurance is needed.

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Second, get a copy of the store receipt.

Forward a copy of the receipt so that your insurance company knows the current retail value of the item. Keep a copy for your records and include it with your home inventory.

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Third, if you received an heirloom piece, have the item appraised.

Heirlooms and antique jewelry will need to be appraised for their dollar value. Ask your insurer for recommendations regarding a reputable appraiser. If the jewelry was purchased on sale, also get the piece appraised as the item should be insured for its current retail value.

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Lastly, add the item to your home inventory.

Everyone should have an up-to-date inventory of their personal possessions. An inventory can help you purchase the correct amount of insurance and speed up the claims process when there is a loss. To make creating your inventory as easy as possible, use the I.I.I.'s free Web-based home inventory software, Know Your Stuff® - Home Inventory. You can add a digital photograph of your new gift and save scanned receipts, and the software includes secure online storage so you can access your inventory anywhere, anytime. You can also download the Know Your Stuff app in the iTunes App Store or from Google Play (search for "iii inventory").

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