



Consumer Electronic Claims - Identifying Facts From Fiction

When reviewing an insured's schedule of loss, are you able to identify fact from fiction? How do you determine if the listed items are accurate or someone's wish list? The key to making these determinations begins with the information & documentation that you are able to obtain from your insured. The more detailed the description and documentation you collect at the beginning of the claim, the less the item(s) can change later in the process making it easier to make an informed accurate assessment.

Possible Supporting Documentation

- Invoices
- Manuals, Warranty Cards or Original Boxes
- Remotes, Cables and listings of other remaining components
- Computer software (Disc's and/or License Key)

Questions to ask about the purchase if your unable to obtain an original invoice.

- Where was it purchased?
- When was it purchased?
- How much did it cost?
- How was it paid?
- Where was it located?
- Do you have a photo(s)?

- For a complete list of feature and function related questions to assist in further quantifying the claimed item(s) please visit the ClaimControl website at www.claimcontrol.ca. Access the 'Information Articles' tab on the front page. This is where you'll find previous articles that are available free of charge - and with no password required - on the subject of:
 - 1) Identifying Major Household Appliances with No Supporting Documentations
 - 2) Identifying Consumer Electronics with No Supporting Documentation

Now that you've collected the available information for the missing items, let's see what this information can tell you?

Let's begin by looking at the supporting documents

Invoices - are almost certainly the best available document to resolve a claim quickly. An original invoice should identify the vendor, model number, date of purchase, price paid, method of payment and sometimes additional relevant information. With a genuine receipt, you'll have everything you need to obtain a like kind and quality replacement for that item and you'll also be able to apply an accurate depreciation.

TECH TIP

The more detailed the description and documentation you collect at the beginning of the claim, the easier the assessment.

What if the insured doesn't have his original invoice? In many cases a reprint of the original invoice is easily obtained from the original retailer. In this age of computerized invoicing, past sales can typically be accessed by simply entering the purchaser's name or phone number. Many retailers are now also able to recall credit card purchases from the credit card number, making the retrieval of misplaced or discarded invoices easier than ever before. Typically the more recent the purchase, the easier it should be to obtain a duplicate receipt. For online purchases, substantiation should be easy as these purchases typically need to be paid by credit card or credit card based payment systems and the purchases typically need to be shipped directly to your insureds home creating a digital record of the purchase.

** Was it a cash purchase?* In the case of a "cash" receipt for a high value item you may want to further examine the invoice to ensure its authenticity. Some details to consider are: Is the business name and address clearly identified. Is the purchaser's name and address on the invoice? Does it match the insured's? Is it a hand written receipt from a company that issues computerized receipts? Does the receipt have an HST or Business number? If you feel uncertain of the validity of the supposed receipt you may want to consider asking the insured to provide you with their bank statement to verify the cash withdrawal for payment that matches the date of purchase?

Manual, Warranty Cards or Original Boxes - With this information you can sometimes identify the exact model or at a minimum typically the series and/or range of models. While not as informative as an invoice, any of these can provide additional information which will assist in the identification of the original model.

Remote Controls - A remote control can occasionally be used to identify an exact model but more often a range of models. While a remote control will most likely only allow you to narrow down the list of possible models it can be one more piece of the puzzle in your goal to further substantiate the claim.

Other Components - Was everything taken? In some cases there may be associated components, accessories, cables or wiring left behind. If this is the case, make a list of take pictures of the remaining equipment. With this list you can often determine if the claimed item is consistent with the remaining models or wiring. If the stolen item(s) were purchased at or near the same time as the remaining items you can now identify the age of the original model from the remaining model(s)

Computer software - All prebuilt computers come preloaded with an operating system and many times your insured either has software preloaded or will purchase software at the time of purchase or soon thereafter. The original software or license/activation number will be provided with information on any legally purchased programs. Does the insured still have

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that software or license/activation number? If they do this can serve two purposes; One it can aid in determining the age/technology of the computer since most software programs are designated to a particular year (example Office 2011) Two, you can also possibly save money by not needing to replace software that was not taken.

What questions you ask will reveal in the absence of supporting documents.

When was it purchased? Electronics and computers are continually evolving. With this evolution comes the ability to define time by technology. Was the model or technology claimed even available at the time it was supposed to have been purchased?

Where was it purchased? Did that vendor ever sell that particular brand or product line? Certain vendors like Apple and Dell also have very good customer records making retrieval of a duplicate invoice that much easier.

How was it paid? Cheque, credit card or financed purchases are easily verifiable through account statements or cancelled cheques.

Where was it located? Would the item(s) fit where they were supposed to have been? Was there a mounting location? Were there a sufficient number of outlets or supporting wiring in that location to support the claimed model(s)?

Now that I have this information, what's next?

How can you determine when a product was released? At what date did a technology or feature become available? Do the components match? Would the peripherals work with the system being claimed? One source of information available to address these questions and many more is the Internet. Another option is an organization that specializes in consumer electronic claims such as ClaimControl. The ClaimControl proprietary database can and will provide you with original product brochures, year of manufacture or release, manufacturer's suggested retail price, other a significant number of additional services including "Ask the Expert" email support and a national 'like kind and quality' replacement quote...all with just the click of your mouse. But no matter what method you use, if you ask questions and secure documentation, you should be able to determine fact from fiction.

This article is designed to provide you with an overview of questions for some of the most popular Equipment.

If you would like to receive expert help in developing a specific strategy for addressing this subject please contact the author Keith Green at 613-233-1508