

Most of us have several devices that we use daily that are indispensable tools that help us to get our jobs done. My tools are a MacBook Pro and an iPad which are used extensively daily without exception. If one of these devices are damaged, doing my job becomes difficult at best. Last month, I found this out the hard way when my laptop suddenly died. That left me with one option; buy a new one!

Laptops, tablets, and smart phones are portable, and all subject to accidental damage and abuse that our desktops and similar devices aren't subject to. Manufacture warranties don't cover anything except a manufacturing defect. So, that means a cracked screen could cost around \$200 to \$400 or more to repair. Smartphones are a little less, but still expensive considering. What about if you drop your laptop and damage your motherboard? That will cost you \$500 and up, depending on the device. Over the lifetime of the product, you can expect one or more "accidents" to happen.

Now, manufactures like Dell, HP, Lenovo, Toshiba, Microsoft, Apple and others offer accidental protection in addition to the warranty as an add-on purchase. Most of these are quite good and cost effective. I won't cover these except to say, read the fine print and compare the coverage to what I have below. Accidental insurance provided by the manufacturers is not always the best coverage for every situation.

After market companies offer protection plans for most all types of gadgets at good prices. The biggest challenge is that there aren't many outside the manufactures accidental plans. The best providers that I found were SquareTrade, eSurranty and Worth Ave Group.

When comparing coverage, items that may be covered are: Theft, Accidental Damage, Liquid, Power Surge, Drops, etc. Not all plans cover all things, so be sure to review what each plan covers. For example, SquareTrade does not cover theft, and Worth Ave. Group does cover theft, but does not cover manufacturing defects.

Review the table below for general coverage from each.

Laptops:

Coverage

SquareTrade

Worth Ave. Group

eSurranty

Theft or Loss

No

Yes

No

Accidental Damage

Yes

Yes

Yes

Liquid Damage

Yes

Yes

Yes

Power Surge/Lightening

No

Yes

Yes

Purchase Limits

First 30 Days

Anytime

Anytime

Terms

2/3 years

2/3 years

2/3 years

Deductible

\$0 or \$75

\$0 or \$100

\$0

Tablets/Smartphones:

Coverage

SquareTrade

Worth Ave. Group

eSurranty

Theft or Loss

No

Yes

No

Accidental Damage

Yes

Yes

Yes

Liquid Damage

Yes

Yes

Yes

Power Surge/Lightening

No

Yes

Yes

Purchase Limits

First 30 Days

Anytime

Anytime

Terms

2/3 years

2/3 years

2/3 years

Deductible

\$0 or \$75

\$0

\$0

Clearly, shopping for laptop or smartphone insurance isn't the most exciting chore, but in the long run, it provides you with the security of prompt replacement of important business equipment.