

Custom and Electronic Property

A basic auto policy is designed and priced to only cover certain vehicle features. You might need extra coverage to take care of expensive vehicle options such as custom or electronic property. These extra features are, primarily, installed either at the auto factory or by a dealership (though many owners also install special features too).

Factory Options

While traditional, factory-installed features are covered by an auto policy, manufacturers sometimes jump ahead of insurance policy designers. For instance, when first introduced, theft deterrent car stereos (which are disabled when removed from the dashboard) were not covered by many auto policies. It is important to read your particular auto policy to make sure that it doesn't contain similar coverage gaps.

Dealer Options

Factory installation does not apply to autos that are modified by a conversion specialist or by an auto dealer before they are offered for sale. Car dealers frequently add options to make their inventory more attractive (and more profitable) to car buyers. Spoilers, body side moldings, special wheels and hub caps, body paint, car phones, speakers and stereos, pin stripes and conversion packages can be added directly onto the dealer invoice.

Pick-up truck and SUV owners should be particularly sensitive to the need to cover added features. Such vehicles typically include hundreds, even thousands of dollars worth of modifications that make them more desirable for use, such as hitches or even complete towing packages. All auto owners should be aware of the need to get additional coverage for security features such as on-board navigation, video and/or security devices.

If you're not sure what is original and what has been added, ask your local dealer. If the information on options is not shared with the insurer, the unknown options may not be covered after a loss. Insurers cannot adjust their premiums for these additional features unless they're told about them, including how much they cost. Ignoring the issue means you risk the chance that some of your valuable property may be uninsured. The best choice is to share your information with your local insurance professional. Together, you can take the steps to get the coverage you need.

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