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## BACKGROUND SCREENING: *Protecting Your Family Through Better Hires*

High net worth individuals confront exceptional risk challenges because of their relative wealth, lifestyle and public profile, according to a white paper published by ACE Private Risk Services. Published research and anecdotal evidence indicate that the affluent are more vulnerable to a range of crimes perpetrated by financial advisers, contractors and domestic employees than average income earners. Such crimes include so-called Ponzi schemes, identity fraud, embezzlement, property theft, kidnapping and ransom, and child molestation, among others. These risks can be reduced through specialized background screening services, conducted by a security firm that specializes in vetting individuals. Nevertheless, no amount of background screening can eliminate all potential loss exposures. While standard insurance policies absorb some of these risks, high net worth individuals are advised to

secure broader coverage with higher limits of financial protection.

### Knowing and minimizing the risks

Those whom you trust to take care of your family, home, and financial well-being can also cause serious harm.

The access you give to people such as financial advisers, carpenters, and nannies exposes you to a wide range of risks.

- **Financial advisers:** Ponzi schemes, embezzlement, identity fraud
- **Domestic employees:** Kidnap and ransom, child molestation, property theft, frivolous lawsuits for sexual harassment or wrongful termination, identity fraud
- **Contractors:** Kidnap and ransom, child molestation, property theft, job abandonment, identity fraud

Too many people have needlessly

become victims because they relied on friends' recommendations, intuition, and resumes. Studies indicate that approximately two-thirds of all job applicants reported they have stretched the truth at least once. Background screening conducted by a professional can help prevent you from hiring an untrustworthy individual.

### How to Access Background Checks

Some insurance companies, such as ACE PRS, which specialize in serving affluent and high net worth individuals, provide access to background screening services. The screens are conducted by an independent security firm on a complimentary or reduced-fee basis. To learn more, contact your Poms and Associates representative.

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# REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO WILDFIRES

The major wildfires in Southern California a year ago burned over 150,000 acres, destroyed dozens of homes, and caused residents to flee from over 10,000 homes. Indeed, wildfires are one of the most destructive natural forces known to mankind. While sometimes caused by lightning, nine out of ten wildfires are human-caused. A wildfire can be defined as any unwanted and unplanned fire burning in forest, shrub, or grass. According to the National Interagency Fire Center, there were over 80,000 wildfires in the United States in 2008. These fires burned an estimated 5.2 million acres.

- If you live in a wildfire-prone area, the following are some tips for you to mitigate the risks of suffering a wildfire loss.
- If you are building a house or planning to replace a roof, consider noncombustible or fire-resistant roofing materials, such as Class A asphalt shingles, metal, cement, and concrete products, or terracotta tiles. These types of roofs are less susceptible to burning embers from a wildfire.
- Remove any dead branches, leaves, and

any other vegetation from your roof and gutters.

- Remove any dry brush from your yard and stack firewood at least 20 or 25 feet from your home.
- Create a “fuel-break” -- driveways, gravel walkways, or lawns.
- Prevent sparks from entering your home by covering vents with wire mesh no larger than 1/8-inch. Cover skylights and chimney outlets with nonflammable screening materials.
- Use tempered glass in your windows since this material withstands high temperatures from wildfires better than regular plate or double pane glass.
- Make trellises of nonflammable metal.
- Avoid certain exterior siding materials, such as vinyl, which soften and melt easily under high temperatures. Instead, siding materials such as stucco or masonry should be selected, since these resist heat better.

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Preferred Client Insurance Services (PCS) is a division of Poms & Associates Insurance Brokers, Inc. that specializes in the analysis and establishment of comprehensive asset protection programs for affluent individuals and families on a global basis. Typical PCS client assets include homes, automobiles, yachts, planes, fine art, jewelry, and collectibles.

Our superior capabilities as a leading insurance broker are derived from drawing on our risk management specialists, and our highly regarded professionals we have assembled within PCS.

For more information on how PCS can work for you, contact your Poms Representative.

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