

## NAIC Disaster Preparedness Insurance Tips

- Take an inventory of your valuables and belongings. This includes taking photographs or a video of each room. This will help your insurance company process claims more quickly by providing documentation of your belongings.
- To enable filing claims more quickly, keep sales receipts and/or canceled checks. Also note the model and serial numbers of the items in your home inventory.
- To protect your belongings in case disaster strikes, make sure you have adequate insurance coverage and that your insurance policies are up to date.
- Store copies of all your insurance policies in a safe location away from your home that is easily accessible in case of disaster. You might want to store your policies and inventory in a waterproof, fireproof box or in a safe, remote location such as a bank safe deposit box. Consider leaving a copy of your inventory with relatives, friends or your insurance provider and store digital pictures in your e-mail or on a Web site for easy retrieval.
- Know what is (and is not) covered by your insurance policy. You might need additional protection depending on where you live.
- Appraise your home periodically to make sure your insurance policy reflects home improvements or renovations. Contact your insurance provider annually to review and update your insurance policy as needed.
- Keep a readily available list of 24-hour contact information for each of your insurance providers.
- Find out if your possessions are insured for the actual cash value or the replacement cost. Actual cash value is the amount it would take to repair or replace damage to your home or possessions after depreciation. Replacement cost is the amount it would take to repair or replace your home or possessions without deducting for depreciation. Speak with your insurance provider to determine whether purchasing replacement coverage is worth the cost.
- As you acquire more valuables — jewelry, family heirlooms, antiques, art — consider purchasing an additional “floater” or “rider” to your policy to cover these special items. These types of items typically are not covered by a basic homeowners or renter’s insurance policy.
- Remember to include in your home inventory those items you rarely use (e.g., holiday decorations, sports equipment, tools, etc.)

- Speak with your insurance provider to find out if your policy covers additional living expenses for a temporary residence if you are unable to live in your home due to damage from a disaster.

### **NAIC Post-Disaster Insurance Tips**

- Call your agent or insurance company's claims hotline and file your claim as soon as possible. Remember to have your policy number and other relevant information readily available. Your policy might require that you make the notification within a certain time frame.
- Collaborate with your insurance company. Ask what documents, forms and data you will need to file a claim. Provide your insurance company with accurate, detailed information. Incorrect or incomplete information will cause a delay in processing your claim.
- Keep a log of all conversations with insurance companies, creditors or relief agencies. Keep copies and records of all correspondence. Write down information about your telephone and in-person discussions, including the date, name and title of the person you spoke with and what was said. Also keep a record of your time and expenses.
- If your home is damaged to the extent that you cannot live there, ask your insurance company if your policy covers additional living expenses.
- Take photographs or a video of the damage.
- Your homeowners and auto policies might require you to make temporary repairs to protect your property from further damage. If possible, take photographs or a video of the damage before making temporary repairs.
- Save all receipts from the temporary and permanent repairs covered by your insurance policy. Your policy should cover the cost of these temporary repairs.
- You might want to postpone permanent repairs until your insurance company has inspected the property and you have reached an agreement on the repair costs. Be prepared to provide the claims adjuster with records of any improvements you made prior to the damage.
- When possible, determine what it will cost to repair your property before you meet with the claims adjuster. Ask the claims adjuster for an itemized explanation of the claim settlement offer.
- If the first offer made by an insurance company does not meet your expectations, be prepared to negotiate the offer.

- Secure bids from multiple contractors. Ask for at least three references and check with your state licensing board and the Better Business Bureau about the contractor's record. Ask for proof of necessary licenses, building permits, insurance and bonding. Record the contractor's license plate number and driver's license number.
- Be wary of contractors who demand payment in full before work is completed. If the contractor needs payment to buy supplies, accompany the contractor and pay the supplier directly.
- If you cannot cover all of your living expenses following a disaster, contact your creditors to negotiate a payment plan.
- If you are injured in the disaster, ask your physician to provide your insurance company with details about your treatment, medical conditions and prognosis.
- If you suspect a medical provider is overcharging, ask the insurance company to audit the bill and verify whether the provider used the proper billing procedure.
- If there is a disagreement about a claim, ask the company for a written letter explaining the reason for the denial and the specific policy language under which the claim is being denied. If you have any questions regarding the fairness of your settlement, contact your state insurance department for assistance.

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