

Homeowners' Insurance

A Toolkit for Consumers



Revised May 2016

Florida Department of Financial Services • Division of Consumer Services • 1-877-MY-FL-CFO (693-5236)

www.MyFloridaCFO.com/Division/Consumers

Homeowners' Insurance **TOOLKIT**

Florida residents know firsthand that it pays to plan ahead. Dealing with wildfires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, winter storms, sinkholes and other disasters, can drastically change our lives. Individual losses such as a home burglary, kitchen fire, or a lightning strike can also disrupt our daily lives. Homeowners' insurance helps pay to repair or rebuild your home and replace personal property due to a covered loss.

This toolkit provides information to assist you with insuring your home. It also contains tools to help you if you have a covered loss that involves the largest investment you've made - your home.

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Legal and Financial Document Checklist

Florida law does not require homeowners' insurance, but most people want to insure the largest investment they may ever make – their home. Also, if you own certain pets or a swimming pool, some cities and counties require liability coverage, which would pay for covered injuries to others, or damage to their property, for which you are legally responsible.

For mortgaged homes, the lending institution may require insurance coverage on the home, including flood (if located in a special zone).

Depending on your home and which insurer you choose, you may obtain one of several homeowners' insurance packages to cover your home and personal property. Each package provides coverage against specified perils or events that cause damage to property, such as fire, windstorm or theft.

Normally, a homeowner's insurance policy provides coverage for the following:

- Structure (the dwelling itself)
- Other structures (like sheds and fences)
- Personal property (the contents of the structures)
- Loss of use (also called Additional Living Expense or ALE)

The first three are defined as "property."

Property

Property coverage helps pay for damage caused by covered perils to your home, the contents of your home and other personal belongings owned by you or family members who live with you. In some cases, it helps pay for damage to other structures, such as tool sheds, detached garages, small boats, guest houses and their contents. Your insurance agent or company can point out the items covered in a given policy.

Most policies provide special limits to some personal property, such as cash, antiques, firearms, jewelry, furs and electronics. You may be able to add additional coverage for these items as an endorsement to your insurance policy for an additional premium.

Your homeowners' insurance policy may also cover your dependent children's belongings while they attend college, whether they live on or off campus. Check with your agent or company representative concerning coverage for children living away from home. You may need a separate policy.



Additional Living Expense (ALE)

Homeowners' policies provide Additional Living Expense coverage that will pay some extra expenses if damage to your home prevents you from living there while it is being repaired. Most policies also provide this coverage when a civil authority (law enforcement agency, emergency management service, etc.) prohibits the use of a residence or access to a residence due to direct damage to neighboring homes by a covered peril.

The items typically covered - above and beyond normal expenses - include extra costs for food, housing, telephone, relocation and storage, utility installation and furniture rental for a temporary residence. Be sure to check your policy to find out what is specifically covered or excluded. This coverage applies only to the additional amounts, over and above differences in expenses. For example, it would apply to the cost of restaurant meals minus "normal" food expenses. It does not cover your mortgage, groceries and utilities or the monthly cost of a telephone in a rented space. These are not expenses over and above your normal expenses.

Your policy may designate a specified limit of coverage for additional living expenses, but your policy does not obligate your company to pay this amount up front or in full if you suffer a total or partial loss. For this reason, you must keep receipts for additional living expenses and submit these to your company for reimbursement. Policies generally offer ALE coverage without any deductible. It applies only to the residence in the event of a loss. ALE coverage does not apply to your dependent children while they are away at college, and flood insurance policies issued through the National Flood Insurance Program do not provide this coverage. If flood is covered under your homeowner's insurance policy or if you have a separate policy issued by the voluntary market, check your policy or talk to your agent to determine coverage.

Personal Liability

This coverage protects you against a claim or lawsuit resulting from (non-auto) bodily injury or property damage to others. For example, if a neighbor slips and falls in your house and sues you, and a jury finds you legally liable, this coverage would pay that claim plus legal fees up to the policy limits. This coverage applies to you and all family members who live with you. It does not cover intentional damage or harm caused by you or family members who live with you. Check your policy for exclusions and discuss them with your agent.

Medical Payments

This coverage pays for medical expenses, up to the medical payment limits, of persons accidentally injured at your home, regardless of fault. It does not apply to your injuries or those of anyone living with you, or to activities involving an at-home business.



Inflation Guard

Inflation can increase the replacement cost of your home and its contents, while the actual cash value of your home may decrease over time. An inflation guard endorsement gradually increases your dwelling's coverage limit annually to assist you in keeping your home insured at its true replacement cost. However, it is your responsibility to make sure you have the amount of coverage you need.

How Much Insurance Should You Buy?

Do not rely on the purchase price of the home, the amount of the mortgage loan, or the amount set by the property tax appraiser or insurance agent. In order to be adequately covered, your home must be insured for the amount it will take to rebuild the home at current prices for building materials and labor costs. You may also need coverage to comply with current building codes when making repairs.

If your home is underinsured at the time of a loss, there may be a penalty or reduction in the amount the insurance company will pay for the loss.

Ask your agent about limits and exclusions.

Insurance Packages

This section explains some of the insurance packages available to Florida homeowners, condominium-unit owners and mobile home owners. The homeowners' policy is a package policy that may be modified, but dwellings, unattached structures, personal property, liability, and medical payments are normally covered.



Homeowners' Insurance

The three packages offered most frequently to owner-occupied, single-family homeowner's include Broad Form HO-2, Special Form HO-3, and Modified Coverage Form HO-8. These policies insure your home and personal property against a number of perils (examples listed below are not inclusive).

Perils may include:

- Fire or lightning
- Windstorm or hail
- Explosion
- Riot or civil commotion
- Aircraft
- Vehicles
- Smoke
- Vandalism or malicious mischief
- Theft
- Falling objects
- Weight of ice, snow or sleet
- Accidental discharge or overflow of water or steam
- Sudden and accidental tearing apart, cracking, burning or bulging
- Freezing
- Sudden and accidental damage from artificially generated electrical current
- Volcanic eruption

Florida Law also requires insurers to provide policyholders the option to exclude coverage for your personal property as well as coverage for windstorm, if the policyholder personally writes a statement that he does not want such coverage.

Coverage under homeowners' insurance policies will vary from company to company. It is important to review your insurance needs with your agent or company representative. It is also very important that you read your policy so you understand the coverage you have.

Special Form (HO-3) is the most popular and most comprehensive homeowners' form of the three forms mentioned above. It covers the home for all causes of loss not specifically excluded. So, it's very important to read the exclusions. All homeowners' policies provide liability coverage.

Condominium Insurance

Condominium Unit-Owners' Form (HO-6) covers your personal property and certain building items not insured by the association's policy. It also includes personal liability coverage.

A condominium association may choose to cover some items in its policy, so make sure you are thoroughly familiar with its by-laws and policy to know what the association is responsible for. If you have difficulty obtaining copies of these documents, call the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Division of Florida, Condominiums, Timeshares and Mobile Homes, at (850) 488-1122.

A condo association policy usually does not cover the following items if they are located within your unit:

- Floor, wall and ceiling coverings
- Electrical fixtures
- Appliances
- Water heaters
- Water filters
- Built-in cabinets and countertops
- Window treatments, including drapes, blinds and hardware replacement

Unit-owners should insure interior additions or upgrades which are not the same kind or quality as the original building items.

If an item is covered by both the association's and unit owner's policy, the association's policy should pay first. This can affect the amount of coverage you need for the building under your policy, so it is important to review your existing policy with your agent to make sure you are adequately covered.

Condo associations may assess individual unit-owners for damage to the commonly owned areas that are not covered by the association's policy. Your unit-owner's policy may provide limited coverage for such a "loss assessment." The extent and amount of "loss assessment" coverage varies by insurance company, but all admitted carriers (those issued a Certificate of Authority by the Office of Insurance Regulation) are required to include a minimum of \$2,000. Always review your coverage with your agent or insurance company. **An assessment by the condo association for the association's policy deductible is usually not covered by your unit owner's assessment coverage.**

Mobile Home Insurance

Mobile home policies may not provide coverage as broad as a homeowner's policy. You should review your individual policy to determine what is covered and what is excluded. There are three settlement options available on a mobile home policy. All three are subject to the limits shown on your policy. You should review your individual policy to determine your options.

A **stated amount policy** specifies that you will recover the policy's face amount in the event of a total loss, based upon the agreement made in your application. Insurance companies usually offer this type of policy for newer-model homes.

An **actual cash value policy** will pay the amount needed to repair a home after depreciation is subtracted.

A **replacement cost policy** will pay for the replacement of a damaged or destroyed home without deducting for depreciation.

Home Rental or Dwelling Insurance

If you rent your home to others, insurance companies offer landlord coverage to suit your situation. If you rent a room or a portion of your home, ask your agent what coverage you may need.



Other Factors to Consider

When analyzing needed coverage, these are some other factors to consider:

Coverage Availability When Storms Threaten

You cannot obtain new or additional coverage when a tropical storm or hurricane watch or warning has been issued for any area within the state of Florida. Don't wait until the last minute to purchase your policy, especially during hurricane season (June 1 through Nov. 30), when several storms can form simultaneously.

Building Materials

The building materials used in the construction of your home will affect the cost to insure it. For example, it's more expensive to insure a frame house than one made of brick. If you are building a new home, using stronger construction materials and construction techniques can save you money on insurance premiums. Talk with your agent to see what discounts and/or reduced premiums are available to you.

Home-Warranty Plans

Homeowners' insurance can protect your home from losses due to fire, theft, and other perils. A home-warranty plan, though, offers a service contract that can pay for unexpected repairs to the home's plumbing, electrical system, appliances, etc., during the warranty period. However, these plans offer no substitute for a homeowners' insurance policy.

Options If You Can't Locate Coverage

The following options may be available if you are having difficulty locating insurance for your home.

Florida Market Assistance Plan (FMAP)

The Florida Market Assistance Plan (FMAP) was created by the Florida legislature in 1985 as a service organization designed to assist consumers in obtaining property and casualty insurance coverage from authorized insurers in the private market.

FMAP's online services utilize a computer database that stores information on consumers seeking insurance coverage for their property located in Florida. The FMAP application matches those seeking insurance coverage with participating licensed Florida agents that may be able to write the requested insurance policy. The matching agent(s) or insurer(s) then call the interested party seeking coverage to determine eligibility and provide an offer where applicable. Their website is www.fmap.org. Their toll free telephone number is 1-800-524-9023.

Citizens Property Insurance Corporation

You may be eligible for coverage with Citizens Property Insurance Corporation (Citizens) if you can't locate coverage in the voluntary market. The 2002 Florida Legislature merged the Florida Windstorm Underwriting Association and the Florida Residential Property and Casualty Joint Underwriting Association to form Citizens. (See the "Windstorm Coverage" section of this guide for more details on Citizens, or visit www.citizensfla.com.) Policies with Citizens are sold by local insurance agents.

Surplus Lines Companies

Admitted companies (those with a Certificate of Authority from the Office of Insurance Regulation) often reject risks that do not meet their underwriting requirements. Some of the underwriting criteria may be the age of the home, the construction of the home, the age of the roof, plumbing or electrical wiring. The location of the home may be an underwriting concern. The insurance company will also ask what type of animals you own.

Surplus Lines insurers help fill this need for consumers who can't obtain coverage from admitted companies. Before turning to a surplus lines insurer, your agent must apply for and receive rejections from at least three admitted companies.

Freedom from most insurance regulation, such as form and rate filings, allows Surplus Lines companies to respond to unmet needs of customers. The one thing you should be aware of is the Surplus Lines Carrier is not covered by the Florida Insurance Guaranty Association in the event it becomes insolvent or goes out of business and you have an unpaid claim or are due a refund of premium. A Surplus Lines policy must have stamped or written on the first page of the policy the following words:

"This insurance is issued pursuant to the Florida Surplus Lines law. Persons insured by Surplus Lines carriers do not have the protection of the Florida Insurance Guaranty Act to the extent of any right of recovery for the obligation of an insolvent unlicensed insurer."

Thoroughly read any Surplus Lines policy, if purchased, since DFS does not regulate the rates these companies charge or the forms they use. These policies may not provide the same coverage or deductibles offered by admitted insurance companies.

Your Lending Institution

Most lenders providing mortgages require you to purchase property insurance to protect their financial interest in the property. The mortgage holder has an interest in the dwelling and unattached structures portion of the policy until the loan is paid in full, but not the personal property, additional living expense or liability portion of the policy.

This means your insurance company will make any claim checks for damage to the dwelling or unattached structures payable to you (the insured) and your financial institution. The lender has a right to make sure repairs are completed.

The lender will inform you of its stipulations to obtain the money for repairs. In some instances, the lender will provide money up front for you to begin the repairs and as they are completed, you will show the lender proof of the repairs and they will continue to advance money. In other instances, the lender may allow you to provide a signed contract for the repairs and they may pay the contractor directly as repairs are made. When repairs are completed, lenders can't keep remaining settlement proceeds to cover the balance of your loan, unless your payments are in arrears.

If you feel your financial institution is withholding funds that are rightfully yours, call the Office of Financial Regulation at 1-850-487-9687.

Force-Placed Homeowners' Insurance

If you fail to obtain homeowners' insurance, your lender may purchase it for you since loan contracts usually require it. This is called "force-placed" insurance.

Warning: The premium for force-placed coverage is very expensive. The policy only covers the structure and not your personal property, or the policy may only cover the loan's outstanding balance. Also, the insured is actually the lender purchasing the policy; therefore, you may not have any rights to the policy even though you were billed for the premium.

Private Mortgage Insurance

Most homeowners know this type of coverage by its initials, PMI. This insurance helps protect lenders from default by borrowers. The mortgage company may require this type of insurance if your down payment is less than 20 percent of the property's value. This insurance allows you to qualify for a larger mortgage than is otherwise available with a small down payment.

Credit Life Insurance

This type of insurance may pay off your home in the event of your death. The premium for this insurance will vary depending on the face amount of coverage, the term of the loan and the age of the insured. Certain health related questions may also be asked on the application. Coverage is not guaranteed.

You may obtain this coverage for both spouses under one contract on a first-to-die basis. This means that the surviving spouse becomes the beneficiary. As with all insurance policies, it is a good idea to do research in order to choose the credit life insurance policy that is right for you.

What About Building a New Home?

If you plan to build your own home or hire a contractor to build one for you, a Builder's Risk policy may be what you need while the home is under construction. Coverage under a typical Builders' Risk policy covers the home from the start of construction and continues until a stated time found in the policy after construction is completed.

Builder's Risk policies cover items such as the home under construction, building materials, machinery, equipment, permanent fixtures, debris removal, pollutant cleanup, floor plans, blueprints, valuable records or papers, landscaping, etc. This coverage can help ensure that you or your contractor can obtain funds to repair or rebuild in case of loss. In addition, liability coverage may be purchased to cover your liability exposure in connection with the construction.

Before you start a home-construction project, find out whether you or your contractor should purchase a Builders Risk policy. Individuals hiring a contractor to build a home can require them to obtain a builders risk policy as part of the construction contract.



Also, some homeowners' policies are used to cover a home under construction. You should contact your insurance agent or insurer for more information.

Policy Termination

Admitted insurance companies can take up to 90-days to decide whether you meet their underwriting guidelines. Within this 90-day period, a company must give you a 20-day notice if it intends to cancel the policy, except for nonpayment of premium, which requires a 10-day notice.

After 90-days, your company may cancel your policy if:

- You don't pay your premium;
- You provided false information on your application;
- You failed to follow the company's requirements; or
- You increased your risks through new activities or home improvements.

For reasons other than nonpayment of premium, the company must provide a 120-day notice before it may cancel your policy.

Companies can always non-renew, with certain limitations, your policy with proper notice. The non-renewal notice must be provided at least 120-days in advance.

You may cancel your policy at any time by providing a written request. You should receive a refund of any unearned premium. However, if you cancel an insurance policy early, the company may retain 10% of the unearned premium amount. If you are changing insurance policies or companies, make sure you do not have a break in coverage between the two policies. This could result in your mortgage company adding the cost of a force-placed policy to your mortgage.

Special Limits on Certain Personal Property

Homeowners' insurance policies usually have special limits of coverage on personal items such as cash, jewelry, silverware, guns, antiques, boats and other items. If you need additional coverage for these items, talk to your insurance agent. In most cases, additional coverage can be obtained by paying an additional premium.

Replacement Cost Versus Actual Cash Value

There are two settlement options available when purchasing insurance on your home. You can elect to insure your home and personal property for Actual Cash Value or Replacement Cost.

Replacement Cost

Replacement Cost is the amount needed to repair or replace your damaged property with materials of similar kind and quality, without deducting for depreciation (the decrease in the value of your home or personal property due to normal wear and tear).

Actual Cash Value

Actual Cash Value is the amount needed to repair or replace an item, less depreciation. For example, your insurance company would deduct for the age and condition of a 17-year-old roof with a 20-year life expectancy. In this scenario, you have used 17 out of 20 years expectancy. You would be paid for the remaining three years value.

Here is how the two settlement options work in practice. Let's say you purchased a new television in 2013 for \$1,000 and it was destroyed by lightning in 2015. If the settlement option available on your insurance policy is Actual Cash Value, your insurer will pay an amount that reflects the current value of the 2013 TV. If the life expectancy of the 2013 TV is approximately 10 years, you would have used two years so you would receive the value of the other eight, \$800. A policy that settles claims based on the Actual Cash Value will consider depreciation. A Replacement Cost policy would cover the cost to replace the TV with a new one of the same like, kind, and quality even if it's more than what you paid in 2013 - say \$1,100.

Your agent must offer you Replacement Cost coverage on your dwelling. In order to receive the replacement cost benefit, most homeowners' insurance policies require the policyholder to insure their home for at least 80% of its replacement value.

If your home is covered by a Replacement Cost policy that requires you to have it insured for at least 80% of its replacement cost, and you do not insure the correct amount, you may become a co-insurer for any partial loss claim.

For instance, if you insure the home for \$100,000 and the true replacement cost is \$200,000, you should have insured the home for at least \$160,000. If you have a loss of \$25,000.00, the company would pay only \$15,625, less your deductible, on the claim. The formula used by the insurer to determine the amount they owe in this example is the **amount of insurance carried** divided by the **amount**

of insurance required, times the amount of loss, equals the amount payable by the insurance company (\$100,000 divided by \$160,000 times \$25,000 = \$15,625 and then subtract the deductible.)

Windstorm Coverage

Most homeowners' insurance policies cover damage caused by windstorms, hurricanes and hail, unless you sign to waive the coverage. Also, if your home is located in the Wind-Pool Area, it is likely that Windstorm Coverage is excluded on your regular homeowner's policy and you must purchase a separate windstorm policy if you want the coverage. Most lenders will require you to carry Windstorm Coverage if you have a mortgage.

Flood Insurance

Most homeowners' policies exclude flood damage (rising water). Depending on your home's location, however, you may qualify for flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). You also may qualify for a discount if you include a special elevation report with your application. Recently, other insurance companies have entered the flood insurance market. In some instances, you may be able to purchase flood insurance through the same insurance company that provides your homeowner's coverage. The private industry policy must meet at least the requirements of policies issued by the NFIP. For more information, contact the National Flood Insurance Program at 1-888-FLOOD29 (1-888-356-6329), or your insurance agent.

Flood insurance is available for your home and personal property. Normally, there is a 30-day waiting period before a flood insurance policy becomes effective with the National Flood Insurance Program, unless the policy is purchased at the same time you purchase or refinance your home. Flood Insurance can be obtained from your local agent.

Sinkholes and Catastrophic Ground Cover Collapse

Insurance companies are not required to automatically include sinkhole coverage on homeowners' insurance policies. In some cases, sinkhole coverage may be offered, but the insurance company has a right to inspect the premises for possible sinkhole activity and decline coverage if it's found. In other cases, the company may decline sinkhole coverage if your home is within a certain distance of confirmed sinkhole activity.

Insurance companies must include "catastrophic ground cover collapse" which means:

1. The abrupt collapse of the ground cover;
2. A depression in the ground cover clearly visible to the naked eye;
3. Structural damage to the building, including the foundation; and
4. The insured structure being condemned and ordered to be vacated by the governmental agency authorized by law to issue such an order for that structure.



Insurers may also restrict sinkhole and catastrophic ground cover collapse to the principal building, as defined in the applicable policy.

Surplus Lines insurers are not required to offer sinkhole coverage, but many do. Ask your agent for details.

Ordinance or Law Exclusion

If a local building ordinance or law has changed which increases the cost to repair or replace your home, the insurance company does not pay that extra amount, unless your policy includes ordinance or law coverage.

This is how it works: Let's say your home was built in 1982. Let's further say the home was damaged over 50% during a hurricane in 2015. At the time of the hurricane, the building code required you to rebuild the entire structure to comply with current building codes if the home was damaged 50% or more. Ordinance or Law coverage could help demolish the undamaged portion and rebuild the home to comply with the current building code. Complying with current building codes may require changes in design and/or building materials which could result in you paying more to repair or rebuild your home. In the example above if you didn't have this valuable coverage, the insurance company would not pay for the demolition of the undamaged portion of the structure or the increased cost to comply with the current building code.



Admitted carriers must include a Ordinance or Law coverage limit of at least 25% of the dwelling coverage. Also, they must allow you to select 50% of the dwelling coverage. However, you can reject this coverage by signing a rejection form.

Mold

Typically, mold that results from a covered peril is covered under your homeowners' policy, although the amount can be limited. An example of a covered peril would be a sudden and accidental discharge of water - like a burst pipe or other plumbing failure, or claims that arise from water intrusions due to hurricanes.

Most insurers offer limited levels of mold-related coverage in their policies. The most common limitation we see is \$10,000. In some cases, an insured can purchase higher limits of mold coverage for an additional premium. Other companies exclude coverage for mold-related claims.

Sample Declarations Page

Where to Locate Policy Information

- 01 - Policyholder name and location of insured dwelling
- 02 - Company Name
- 03 - Policy Number
- 04 - Premium
- 05 - Mortgage holder name and address jewelry or silverware
- 06 - Summary of basic coverages and limits
- 07a - Deductible (amount policyholder must pay per claim or accident)
- 07b - Hurricane deductible
- 08 - Liability protection
- 09 - Type of policy (in this case, HO-3)
- 10 - Optional coverage (called an endorsement) for special items such as
- 11 - Coverage offered or required under Florida law
- 12 - Name of agent or company representative

PROTECTORS FIRE & CASUALTY CO.

POLICY NUMBER

THIS IS NOT A BILL 03 10-91-8880-4

HOMEOWNERS RENEWAL DECLARATIONS POLICY

01 NAMED INSURED AND MAILING ADDRESS: **SMITH, JOE AND JANE**
123 OAK STREET
HOMETOWN, FL 12345-6789

POLICY PERIOD:
1201 A.M. STANDARD
TIME AT THE INSURED RESIDENCE
FROM: 6/1/06 TO: 6/1/07

THE RESIDENCE COVERED BY THIS POLICY IS LOCATED AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

02 PROTECTORS FIRE & CASUALTY COMPANY
P.O. BOX 12345
BOSTON MA 01234

RENEWAL CERTIFICATE
PREPARED MAR 11 2006

DATE DUE 6/1/06	PLEASE PAY THIS AMOUNT \$479.53	04
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IF YOU HAVE MOVED, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR AGENT

FULL PAYMENT BY DATE DUE
EXTENDS POLICY PERIOD TO JUNE 1, 2006

POLICY NUMBER
10-91-8880-4

05 MORTGAGEE: TRUST BANK
P.O. BOX 000
TALLAHASSEE FL
34567-8910

09 FORMS, OPTIONS AND ENDORSEMENTS:
SPECIAL FORM 3 FP-7923
JEWELRY AND FURS \$2,500/\$5,000 OPT JF
SILVERWARE THEFT \$5,000 OPT SILG
HOME COMPUTER \$10,000 OPT XC
REPLACEMENT COSTS/CONTENTS OPT RC

06 COVERAGES/LIMITS
SECTION I
A DWELLING \$100,000
OTHER STRUCTURES \$10,000
B PERSONAL PROPERTY \$50,000
C LOSS OF USE ACTUAL LOSS
SUSTAINED

07a DEDUCTIBLES-SECTION I
COVERED LOSS \$500

07b HURRICANE: SPECIAL 2% DEDUCTIBLE
THIS POLICY CONTAINS A SEPARATE DEDUCTIBLE FOR HURRICANE LOSSES, WHICH MAY RESULT IN HIGH OUTDOOR-POCKET EXPENSES TO YOU.

08 SECTION II
L PERSONAL LIABILITY \$100,000
DAMAGE TO PROPERTY
OF OTHERS \$500
M MEDICAL PAYMENTS \$1,000
TO OTHERS(EACH PERSON)

11 FLORIDA-SPECIFIC ENDORSEMENTS
SINKHOLE FL 7210.4
ORDINANCE/LAN FE 7310.4

SURCHARGES (REQUIRED BY FLORIDA LAW):
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES \$2.00
FLORIDA HURRICANE CATASTROPHE FUND \$4.53

*SPECIAL DISCOUNTS:
SMOKE DETECTORS
DEAD-BOLT LOCKS
FIRE EXTINGUISHERS
BURGLAR ALARM
APPROVED STROM SHUTTERS
* TOTAL DISCOUNTS:
20% OR \$176 PER
YEAR

12 Thanks for letting us serve you.
Agent: BROWN, BONNIE
Telephone: 904-555-1234

We recommend completing a room-by-room inventory so if you have a claim, you will be able to provide complete and accurate information to the insurance company so they can process your claim. The more detailed documentation you can supply during the claims process, the fewer problems you will experience.

The following inventory includes the main rooms of a home, but don't forget other areas such as your closets, basement, attic, garage, porch, patio, workroom or sheds. In addition to completing an inventory, take photos of your personal property. Pictures add details about your inventory that written documents can't. Also, include serial numbers if they are available.

Once the inventory is complete, estimate the replacement cost of your property using current prices and compare that amount to your personal property coverage limit. If you feel your coverage should be increased, contact your agent. Also, review your inventory list for items that may be underinsured due to the limitations on certain types of personal property (discussed earlier). Since insurance policies differ, you should check your own insurance policy for the list of personal property subject to limitations. If you determine you need additional coverage for any of these items, contact your insurance agent.

It's very important to update your inventory at least once a year.

Personal Asset Inventory

The inventory provided includes the following rooms. Use additional sheets of paper if needed.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Living Room
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dining Room
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kitchen
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Room (Den)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bedrooms
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bathrooms
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

TIP: If possible, take photographs or video recordings of your property and store all records in a safe, dry place.

TIP: When dealing with an insurance claim, never give original documents to anyone. Always provide copies and keep the original documents.

Disclaimer: This toolkit may not provide a complete list of items in your inventory. You should add pages as needed to complete your own personal inventory.

Financial Account Information

Name of Institution:
Address:
Phone Number:
Account Number:
Website:

Mortgage Information

If your home is mortgaged, any insurance claim settlement will be made out to you and the mortgage holder. You will need to keep the mortgage holder informed of the process and arrange a schedule of release of funds for repairs.

Name of Institution:
Address:
Phone Number:
Account Number:
Website:
Additional Accounts (utility companies, cell phone provider, etc):

Living Room

Item	Qty	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Brand Name	Make / Model / Serial Number
Furniture					
Sofas/Chairs					
Mirrors					
Lamps					
Rugs/Carpet					
Tables					
Curtains/Draperies					
Entertainment Center					
Bookcases/Books					
Other:					
Arts and Crafts					
Pictures/Paintings					
Statues/Pottery					
Other:					
Electronics					
Television					
Stereo					
VCR/DVD					
CDs					
Telephones					
Computer					
Clocks					
Other:					
Miscellaneous					
Air Conditioner					
Cabinets					
Fireplace fixtures					
Blinds					
Other:					
Additional Notes:					

Dining Room

Item	Qty	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Brand Name	Make / Model / Serial Number
Furniture					
Tables					
Chairs					
Cabinets					
Curtains/Draperies					
Chandeliers/Lamps					
Mirrors					
Rugs/Carpet					
Other:					
Electronics					
Telephones					
Clocks					
Other:					
Arts and Crafts					
Pictures/Paintings					
Statues/Pottery					
Other:					
Miscellaneous					
China/Crystal					
Glassware					
Table Linens					
Blinds					
Other:					
Additional Notes:					

Kitchen

Item	Qty	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Brand Name	Make / Model / Serial Number
Furniture					
Floor Mats					
Cabinets					
Curtains/Draperies					
Tables					
Chairs					
Other:					
Major Appliances					
Freezer					
Refrigerator					
Oven					
Microw ave					
Other:					
Utensils					
Pots/Pans					
Silverw are					
Glasses					
Plates/Dishes					
Cooking Utensils					
Other:					
Miscellaneous					
Blender					
Toaster					
Can Opener					
Coffee Maker					
Pictures/Paintings					
Blinds					
Cabinets					
Other:					
Additional Notes:					

Family Room (Den)

Item	Qty	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Brand Name	Make / Model / Serial Number
Furniture					
Tables					
Sofas/Chairs					
Rugs/Carpet					
Entertainment Center					
Game table					
Bookcases/Books					
Desks					
Mirrors					
Other:					
Electronics					
Television					
VCR/DVD					
Stereo					
CDs					
Computer					
Video Game System					
Clocks					
Other:					
Arts and Crafts					
Pictures/Paintings					
Statues/Pottery					
Other:					
Miscellaneous					
Air Conditioner					
Fireplace fixtures					
Blinds/Draperies					
Other:					
Additional Notes:					

Bedrooms					
Item	Qty	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Brand Name	Make / Model / Serial Number
Furniture					
Beds					
Nightstand					
Lamps					
Desks					
Rugs/Carpet					
Bed Linens					
Curtains/Draperies					
Dressers					
Bureaus/Chests					
Bookcases/Books					
Mirrors					
Other:					
Arts and Crafts					
Pictures/Paintings					
Statues/Pottery					
Other:					
Electronics					
Computer					
Clocks					
Television					
VCR/DVD					
Stereo					
CDs					
Other:					
Miscellaneous					
Blinds					
Clothing					
Other:					
Additional Notes:					

Bathrooms

Item	Qty	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Brand Name	Make / Model / Serial Number
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Furniture

Hamper					
Floor Mats					
Mirrors					
Bath Mats					
Bathtub					
Curtains/Draperies					
Other:					

Arts and Crafts

Pictures/Paintings					
Statues/Pottery					
Other:					

Electronics

Electric Toothbrush					
Hair Dryer					
Shaver					
Curlers					
Other:					

Miscellaneous

Towels/Linens					
Toiletries					
Scale					
Other:					

Additional Notes:

PROPERTY INVENTORY & CLAIM PROCESS

Other					
Item	Qty	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Brand Name	Make / Model / Serial Number
Real Estate					
Vehicles					
Cars/Trucks					
Boats					
RVs					
Other:					
Jewelry and Collectibles					
Computer Hardware/Peripheral Devices					
Additional Notes:					

PROPERTY INVENTORY & CLAIM PROCESS

Other					
Item	Qty	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Brand Name	Make / Model / Serial Number
Miscellaneous					
Cameras					
Furs					
Antiques					
Tools					
Firearms					
Plants					
Toys/Porcelain Dolls					
Telescope					
Fish/Fish Tanks					
Musical Instruments					
Outdoor Furniture					
Lawnmower					
Other:					
Additional Notes:					

The Claims Process

The first thing you should do if you have a covered loss is determine if the amount of the loss exceeds your policy deductible. If the damage exceeds your deductible, report the loss to your agent or insurance company as soon as possible. The insurance company generally assigns an insurance adjuster to handle your claim.

If your home is damaged, you must make emergency repairs to prevent further damage. You should keep all your receipts for material and labor while making emergency repairs. It is beneficial to take pictures of the damaged property before starting the emergency repairs. You should never repair all the structure damage or throw away any damaged personal property until instructed to do so by the adjuster. The company has a right to inspect the damage before you receive payment.

Make sure your adjuster is properly licensed in Florida. If you have any questions about the license status of an adjuster, or the way your claim was handled, call the DFS Consumer Helpline toll-free at 1-877-My-FL-CFO (1-877-693-5236).

Keep a phone log of the dates, times, and names of all persons you speak to regarding your claim. Also keep a copy of anything you sign.

Options Available If You Have a Claim Dispute

Mediation: This is an informal process where a trained, neutral mediator tries to help resolve the dispute without dictating the outcome. The insurance company pays the cost of the mediation process. Mediation is not binding on either party. You are not required to accept the offer made by the company at the mediation conference. To determine if your claim qualifies for mediation, call our Consumer Helpline at 1-877-My-FL-CFO (1-877-693-5236).

Appraisal: If you and your company representative cannot reach a satisfactory settlement and your policy allows appraisal, you may hire an appraiser to reach a compromise figure. Your appraiser will negotiate with the insurer's appraiser to reach a settlement. If the two appraisers cannot agree, they will hire an umpire. The cost of the umpire is shared by you and the insurer. A decision of any two of the three appraisers is binding on all parties.

Types of Adjusters

When you report a claim to your insurer, they normally assign an adjuster to inspect and estimate your loss. Adjusters must be licensed in the state of Florida. There are three types of adjusters.

1. **Company Adjusters**: They work and are paid by your insurance company to inspect and estimate your loss. They submit a report directly to the insurance company which is used by the company to determine payment to you. In the event of a disaster, emergency adjusters are licensed to assist in Florida. The emergency adjusters are also hired and paid by the insurance companies.
2. **Independent adjusters**: They may be self-employed or work for an independent adjusting firm. Independent adjusters and their firms are also hired and paid by insurance companies to adjust claims of their policyholders. They inspect and estimate your loss and report it to the insurance company. The company makes the final decision regarding the amount they pay you.

PROPERTY INVENTORY & CLAIM PROCESS

- Public adjusters: They may be self-employed or work for a public adjusting firm. You may hire a public adjuster to estimate your damage and negotiate a settlement on your behalf with the insurance company. A public adjuster charges a fee to handle the claim on your behalf. Their fee is normally stated on the contract as a percentage of the amount they collect on your behalf. In Florida, there are limitations on the amount public adjusters can charge depending on the type of claim you have. When you call to verify a public adjuster's license, you should also verify the amount they are charging you is correct.

Make sure your adjuster is properly licensed in Florida. If you have any questions about the license status of an adjuster, or the way your claim was handled, call the DFS Consumer Helpline toll-free at 1-877-My-FL-CFO (1-877-693-5236).

You may use the following log to record the name and contact information for the adjuster assigned to your claim as well as any conversations you have. You should also document attempts to contact the adjuster that were unsuccessful or conversations with others regarding your claim. This information could be beneficial at a later date.

Adjuster Name:
Adjuster's Company:
Adjuster's Phone:
Adjuster's License Number:
Claim Number:

LOG:

Before the Storm

- Conduct scheduled reviews of your insurance policy to make sure you are adequately covered and your coverage is up to date.
- Make sure you have a designated place to meet other family members in the event of an emergency. If you are directed to a specific location by local authorities, make sure other family members know where you are.
- Listen to the news on your TV or radio to receive emergency instructions from local authorities and to keep up with the current weather conditions. You should have a battery-operated radio available in case you lose power. Make sure you have extra batteries on hand.
- If you know a storm is headed your way, fill up your gas tank in case you must evacuate. It is not always easy to find an operating gas station as the storm approaches.
- If you must evacuate, try to contact your employer and let them know your plans.
- You should always have an emergency kit for injuries or illnesses on hand. It is a good idea to have one located permanently in your vehicle.
- Make advance plans for your pets. Not all public shelters or hotels allow animals unless they are “service animals”. If you must leave your pets at home, leave a 3-day supply of food and water.
- Before a storm arrives, move any outside furniture or other valuables into your home and lock all windows and doors. Pick up any loose items in the yard as they can become projectiles in a storm. Also, check on your neighbors to see if they need assistance.
- You should keep cash on hand. ATMs will not work if the power is out, and banks may not be able to restock the ATMs for a while once power is restored.

As the Storm Approaches

Make sure your family has a plan of evacuation, including a list of people to contact in the event you need to leave the area.

People to Contact

List individuals to be contacted before and after evacuation (one person should be located out of state if possible).

Name:
Email:
Phone Number:
Name:
Email:
Phone Number:

List Evacuation Route Options:

Route One:
Storm Shelter:
Route Two:
Storm Shelter:

Medical Information

Physician's Name:
Physician's Phone Number:
Pharmacy Name:
Pharmacy Phone Number:

Note: If you take prescription medications regularly, you should contact your pharmacy before a storm strikes to get prescriptions filled so that you don't run out.

- List of Necessary Medications
- Health Insurance ID card (s)
- Record of Immunizations/Allergies
- Disabilities Documentation
- Living Will
- Dental Records / Child Identity Cards / DNA Swabs

Make sure you have the following information. If you are missing some of this information and are unsure where to obtain it, see the list of resources at the end of this list. These items may assist if you need to file for government disaster assistance, tax assistance, etc.

Insurance Policies

Make sure you have the correct phone number to report a claim with your insurance company. Review your coverage to make sure it is adequate for your current circumstances.

- Property Insurance
- Auto Insurance
- Health Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Other

Financial Information

- Bank/Credit Union Statements
- Credit/Debit Card Statements
- Retirement Accounts (401K, TSP, IRA)
- Investment Accounts (Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Funds)

Tax Information

Tax returns from the previous year may be required to apply for loans and to verify your income in the event you need to apply for assistance.

- Previous Year's Income Tax Return
- Property Tax Statement
- Personal Property Tax (i.e. Car Tax)

Sources of Income/Assets

You may be required to provide verification of your income and its source if you need to apply for assistance.

- Recent Pay Stubs for All Sources of Income
- Government Benefits (e.g. Social Security, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Veterans')
- Alimony Income
- Child Support Income
- Professional Appraisals of Personal Property
- Rewards Accounts (e.g., Frequent Flyer Programs, Hotel Rewards)

Special Note about Security Concerns

In addition, electronic payments, credit/debit cards and software programs for taxes and other finances require a password, PIN (Personal Identification Number) or personal security questions as an extra measure of protection. It is important to keep these access codes secure. DO NOT include a list of passwords and PINs in your documents.

Choosing secure passwords is one of the most important things you can do to keep your electronic accounts safe and avoid the headaches and potential suffering caused by security breaches. Be sure to select a password or PIN that is something you will be able to remember, but that is NOT something easily associated with you, such as a birth date, phone number, nickname or other reference someone could easily discover. Never write your password down or store it in an unencrypted file.

NEVER give out a password or PIN for any account to anyone, no matter who the person is or claims to be. No customer service representative, systems administrator or corporate security officer should ever ask you for your password or PIN. If someone is authorized to access your account, he or she does not need your password to get access.

Vital Insurance Information

The following information will be of the most importance immediately after a storm and will help expedite the filing of claims. Be sure to know what your insurance policies cover. It is a good idea to perform an annual review of the type and amount of coverage you have, to make sure you are adequately protected in the event of a loss.

Property Insurance

- Company Name
- Policy Number
- Company Phone Number
- Company Address
- Deductible
- Premium Due Date

Health Insurance

- Company Name
- Policy Number
- Company Phone Number
- Company Address
- Deductible
- Premium Due Date

Wind Only Policy

- Company Name
- Policy Number
- Company Phone Number
- Company Address
- Deductible
- Premium Due Date

Life Insurance

- Company Name
- Policy Number
- Company Phone Number
- Company Address
- Deductible
- Premium Due Date

Auto Insurance

- Company Name
- Policy Number
- Company Phone Number
- Company Address
- Deductible
- Premium Due Date

Other Insurance (Boat, Windstorm, Flood, etc.)

- Type of Policy
- Company Name
- Policy Number
- Company Phone Number
- Company Address
- Deductible
- Premium Due Date

Financial Obligations

Having a record of your financial obligations can be extremely important to demonstrate your discretionary income and to qualify for income-based assistance following a disaster. If you do not have a lease, having proof of utility payments is very important to demonstrate residence in the home.

- Mortgage Statement
- Lease
- Utility Bills (Electric, Water, Gas)
- Car Payment
- Student Loan
- Alimony Payments
- Child Support Payments
- Elder Care Facilities
- Other Debt

How to Get Important Documents

You can obtain copies of birth, death, marriage, divorce and adoption certificates from your state health or social services administrations for a minimal fee.

The IRS requires all U.S. Citizens who receive income to have a Social Security Number. You may obtain assistance in obtaining replacement cards at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnumber/> or you may visit your local Social Security Office.

If you need to replace your passport, a copy of your passport helps expedite this process. Additional information may be obtained at <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>.

If you need to replace naturalization documents please visit <http://www.uscis.gov/n-565>. Naturalization documents are the only acceptable proof of citizenship for individuals not born in the United States. Additional information regarding U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is also available at the site listed above.

A Will is an extremely important document that can help reduce family conflicts, probate, time and expenses during the stressful time of losing a loved one. A Short Form Will, an uncomplicated will used to give all assets equally to one or more heirs, can generally be obtained for less than \$10. Most financial planners can help you with this or you can contact your local legal aid offices.

A Power of Attorney is a legal document that authorizes another person to act on your behalf. That person does not have to be an attorney, just someone you trust to make decisions for you if you cannot make them yourself. A Power of Attorney can grant complete authority or can be limited to certain acts and/or for certain periods of time.

If you need a copy of your mortgage or deed of trust, contact your lending institution. Proof of home ownership may be required in order to receive federal disaster assistance.

If you do not have the title or registration to your vehicle, you should be able to get a duplicate title or registration from your local Department of Motor Vehicles.

