



Hurricane Season Flooding Can Wipe out Homes and Businesses, Cause Devastating Loss of Personal Property

ATLANTA, Aug. 20, 2015 - There's one certainty about hurricane season in the U.S. - expect the unexpected.

Although it's been a decade since Hurricane Katrina slammed the Gulf Coast, and a year since Hurricane Arthur hit North Carolina in July 2014, homeowners need to remain vigilant about protecting their lives and property.

"Consumers should understand that although they may not be along the coast, the effects of a hurricane can cover a vast area. Homeowners and renters alike should make sure they have appropriate insurance coverage to protect what matters most," says Gene Mergelmeyer, president and CEO of Assurant Specialty Property.

A hurricane need not reach Category 5 status to cause devastation - in 2012, Superstorm Sandy killed 125 people, caused \$62 billion in damages and created 14-foot storm surges in New York and New Jersey. Even a common rainstorm can drench homes and destroy belongings. While standard insurance policies typically cover such perils as fire, theft, tornadoes and lightning, many exclude flooding, which can be extremely costly.

"Flooding is the most common natural disaster in the U.S., but it's not always covered, and people don't realize it until it's too late. So it's a good idea to ask an insurance agent about federally-guaranteed flood coverage," Mergelmeyer says.

The Insurance Information Institute offers a [Hurricane Season Insurance Checklist](#) that walks consumers through a series of questions to determine if they have adequate coverage. Among the things policyholders need to know:

- Whether current insurance coverage is sufficient to rebuild a home
- The value of personal possessions
- The amount of coverage available for additional living expenses if a home is uninhabitable
- The deductible for hurricane and wind damage
- Which disasters are covered by insurance

While flood damage can result in substantial financial losses, consumers in [participating communities](#) can get coverage through the [National Flood Insurance Program](#) administered by FEMA, which is



An Assurant claims specialist at work at Breezy Point, N.Y., following Superstorm Sandy.

available through private insurance agents. Flood insurance is available for homes, condominiums, apartments, commercial structures and mobile homes.

Because hurricane season runs June through November, and there is often a 30-day waiting period before a policy takes effect, there's no time like the present to obtain insurance.

Keep Updated Inventory of Property

In addition to buying insurance, consumers can protect their property by making a record of their home's contents.

"Creating a room-by-room inventory of your possessions is important, and it should be updated whenever you make a substantial purchase, such as a flat-screen TV or jewelry," Mergelmeyer says. "A phone video is a great way to capture what you own. Once completed, keep the inventory, insurance policies and other important documentation in a secure place such as a safe-deposit box. During a flood, documents can be destroyed or lost, which can delay your claim."

For additional resources about how to prepare for hurricanes, check out the National Hurricane Center's new [webpage](#) for the 2015 season

Assurant Specialty Property is a leading provider of insurance services in partnership with mortgage lenders, property managers, financial institutions, manufactured home sellers, auto finance companies and their customers. Services include insurance tracking and management and lender-placed homeowners insurance, as well as renters and flood insurance, property preservation and valuation services. www.assurantspecialtyproperty.com

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