

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 12, 2015

Contact: Danielle Barrick, director of communications, (603) 271-7973, ext. 336,
danielle.barrick@ins.nh.gov

NH Insurance Department Urges Residents: Know Your Flood Coverage, Your Risk

Concord, NH – New Hampshire Insurance Commissioner Roger Sevigny urges Granite State residents to review their insurance policies and understand how likely they are to be affected by potential flooding.

“The best time to review your flood insurance options is before a flood occurs,” said Commissioner Sevigny. “Without understanding your risk and insurance options, you might find yourself inadequately covered when you need coverage the most.”

Even if you don't live near a body of water, you may not be safe from potential flood damage. According to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), floods are the No. 1 natural disaster in the U.S. They calculate that consumers outside of high-risk flood areas account for more than 1 in 5 flood insurance claims.

Are You Covered?

The standard homeowners insurance form excludes payment for damages caused by flood or other water-related perils. Check “SECTION I - EXCLUSIONS A.3. Water Damage” on your form to learn more about what those exclusions are, and/or contact your insurance agent or insurance company to find out more about what your policy currently covers.

Flood insurance is available through the NFIP to homeowners, renters, and business owners if their community participates in the NFIP. It may be purchased through licensed property and casualty insurance agents or through many private insurance companies. There's a 30-day waiting period from date of purchase before a policy goes into effect. Contact the NFIP at (800) 427-4661 or visit <https://www.floodsmart.gov> for more information.

Flood damage caused by hurricanes, rivers and tidal waters over at least two acres is generally covered by a flood policy. Flooding from wind-driven rain when rain enters through a wind-damaged window or door, hole in a wall or the roof is typically not covered by a flood policy but is generally included in most homeowners policies. Flood insurance covers overflow, inland, or tidal waters and unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters of any source. The flood must be a general and temporary condition.

Flood Insurance

The NFIP defines flooding as a general and temporary condition where two or more properties or two or more acres of normally dry land are inundated by water or mud flow. Although anyone could suffer a loss from flooding, where you live affects your level of risk.

The NFIP divides risk levels into three categories:

- **High-risk areas:** These have at least a 1 percent chance of flooding annually. All homeowners in these areas with mortgages from the federally regulated or insured lenders are required to buy flood insurance.

- **Moderate- to low-risk areas:** These have less chance of flooding annually, but the possibility is not completely removed. Flood insurance in these areas is not required, but it is recommended for all property owners and renters.
- **Undetermined-risk areas:** Areas where flood-hazard analysis has not been conducted but a flood risk still exists.

The standard flood insurance policy covers direct physical damage to your insured property up to the replacement cost or actual cash value of damages, or the policy limit of liability, whichever is less. It covers structural damage, including damage to your furnace, water heater, air conditioner, and flooring as well as debris clean-up. Coverage for basements, crawlspaces, and ground-level enclosures on elevated homes is limited, so talk to your agent about any restrictions in your policy. The contents of your home are not covered under a standard flood insurance policy.

What to Do After a Flood

After a flood, contact your insurance agent or insurer. You likely will be advised to mitigate your damage as soon as possible: removing wet items wherever possible, and cleaning and drying them.

Take photos of floodwater in your home and of any damaged property, and make a list of damaged or lost items, including the date you purchased them and the value with any receipts.

Beware of fraudulent schemes after a flood. Protect yourself by getting more than one bid from contractors and requesting at least three references. Ask for proof of necessary licenses, building permits, insurance, and bonding. Record the contractor's license plate number and driver's license number, and then check for any complaints with the Better Business Bureau: <https://www.bbb.org>.

To learn more about flood risks and coverage, visit the FFIP's website: <https://www.floodsmart.gov/>.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has created flood maps: To access the flood map for your community, visit: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>.

The New Hampshire Insurance Department Can Help

Contact us with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your insurance coverage at 1-800-852-3416 or (603) 271-1406, or by email at consumerservices@ins.nh.gov. If you wish to file a grievance, you may call, email, or submit a complaint electronically or by mail or fax: <http://www.nh.gov/insurance/consumers/complaints.htm>.

The New Hampshire Insurance Department's mission is to promote and protect the public good by ensuring the existence of a safe and competitive insurance marketplace through the development and enforcement of the insurance laws of the State of New Hampshire. For more information, visit www.nh.gov/insurance.

###