



### Starting Your Recovery: FEMA's Flood Insurance Claim Process

Cleaning up and recovering from flooding takes time and can be overwhelming. The information below outlines what you need to know as you go through FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) claims process. Additional helpful information and infographics are available online, at [fema.gov/nfip-file-your-claim](http://fema.gov/nfip-file-your-claim).

#### Start the Claims Process

When it is safe to return to your home, report your loss immediately to your agent or insurance company and ask if you can get an advance payment to help you start recovering. This is also a good time to clarify your flood insurance coverage limits and what your policy covers. You might have a policy that only covers your structure, or you might have a policy that covers your personal items; some people have both.

If you are not sure how to contact your agent or insurance company, call **800-427-4661**. Make sure you have the following information handy when speaking to your agent or insurance company:

- Policy Declarations page (official document detailing your flood insurance coverage), if available
- Contact information to reach you: Telephone phone number or alternate contact number; email address
- The insured property location
- The name of any mortgage company(s)

An insurance adjuster should contact you within a few days of starting your claim. If you do not hear from an insurance adjuster, you can contact your insurance agent or company again.

**NOTE:** In addition to filing a flood claim, flood insurance policyholders should register for disaster assistance by calling toll-free **800-621-3362 (800-462-7585 TTY)** or by applying online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](http://DisasterAssistance.gov). Additional federal disaster assistance may be available to you for items that are not covered by your policy.

#### Prepare for the Inspection and Make Repairs

Before entering, make sure it's safe to re-enter the building. Take many photographs and videos of all of the damage, including personal property, building damage, and standing floodwater levels, both inside and out, **before you discard anything**. Your insurance adjuster will need evidence of the damage to your home and possessions to prepare your repair estimate.

- For items like washers & dryers, hot water heaters, kitchen appliances, televisions, and computers, make sure you take a photograph of the make, model, and serial number.
- For your building items (e.g., flooring), retain samples such as carpet, wallpaper, and drapes for your insurance adjuster's inspection.
- Immediately throw away flooded content items that pose a health risk, such as perishable food items, clothing, cushions, pillows, etc. **after** photographing them.
- Contact repair services if the building's electrical, water, or HVAC systems are damaged. It's important to consult your insurance adjuster or insurance company before you sign any agreement or contract with a cleaning, remediation, or maintenance contractor.

Your community building department can provide useful information about what it means if your building is considered substantially damaged; provide tips on how to better protect or repair your home when rebuilding; and explain how to obtain building permits.

#### Work with Your Insurance Adjuster

When your insurance adjuster arrives, they should show you their official identification (Driver's License and Company ID or Flood Control Number [FCN card]). They should also provide you with contact information,

such as their name, email, phone number, and the name of the adjusting firm.

When meeting with you, your insurance adjuster should:

- Explain the NFIP flood claims process.
- Inspect your property—during which he/she will scope your loss by taking measurements and photos.
- Explain what an advance payment is and how you can receive one.
- Discuss your policy coverage and provide information about how you should present your loss to your insurance company.
- Ask for a current mailing address and phone number if you are displaced.
- Discuss if you are eligible for *Increased Cost of Compliance* ([fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/12164](https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/12164)).

**Note:** The insurance adjuster should never ask you for money or collect your deductible amount or charge you a fee for their services.

### **Document Your Loss and Receive Payment**

Your insurance adjuster will help you document flood damage for your claim. Below are some examples of what you can do to help the claims process go smoothly:

- Speak with your agent about your insurance policy, what it covers, and read the NFIP *Claims Handbook* ([fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/6659](https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/6659)).
- Provide the photos and videos of your flood loss to your insurance adjuster. It can be helpful to organize these by room.
- Keep documents showing how you repaired or replaced flood damaged items, such as receipts, bank statements, and contractor's invoices. Provide these documents to your adjuster.

Your insurance adjuster will work with you to submit an accurate estimate of your flood loss. Be sure you ask your insurance company about any important deadlines you need to meet and keep copies of all documents pertaining to your flood claim, including everything you submit to your insurance company. This will help ensure you receive a claim payment that reflects your flood loss, within your policy limits.

### **Who to Contact if You Have Questions**

Adjuster name: \_\_\_\_\_

Adjuster phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Adjuster email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please call or email your insurance adjuster

Insurance company: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance company phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance company email: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Unsatisfied with Your Claim Payment?**

Your flood insurance company is committed to ensuring that you receive the full amount you are entitled to under your flood insurance policy. If you receive a letter from your flood insurance company denying all or part of your claim, or you would like to request an additional payment, you have several options to help make sure you receive the full amount due under your policy. For additional information, visit [fema.gov/flood-claim-appeals-and-guidance](https://www.fema.gov/flood-claim-appeals-and-guidance).

### **Expect Other Officials to Visit your Home**

As you recover, there are several different organizations and agencies that might send representatives to your home. Learn more about these representatives at *Who's Knocking at Your Door?* ([fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/150843](https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/150843)).

### **Need Additional Assistance?**

For more information on the claims process, visit [fema.gov/nfip-file-your-claim](https://www.fema.gov/nfip-file-your-claim) or the NFIP Call Center at 800-427-4661.