

As South Carolinians File Auto, Flood Claims, I.I.I. Tips Can Make the Claims Filing Process More Efficient

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NEW YORK, October 13, 2015 ? As South Carolinians assess the property damage caused by this month's severe inland flooding and prepare to rebuild, it is important to understand the claims filing process, according to the [Insurance Information Institute \(I.I.I.\)](#).

When filing an auto or homeowners claim, the first step is to call your insurance professional as soon as possible to start the claims process. If you had to relocate, let your company know where you are currently residing and how best to reach you.

Flood damage to either a residence or a business is covered by policies provided by FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), as well as a few private insurance companies. About *14 percent* of U.S. homeowners have a flood insurance policy, a 2015 I.I.I. survey found. In the South, that number was 21 percent, the highest for any region of the United States. Standard business, homeowners and renters insurance policies do *not* cover flood damage.

The optional comprehensive portion of an auto insurance policy also covers flood related damage. More than 75 percent of U.S. drivers have comprehensive coverage.

In order to make the claims filing process more efficient and accurate, the I.I.I. has provided some claim

filing tips.

Flood Insurance

- Locate the insurance company name and your policy number before calling your insurance professional.
- Provide a list of damaged property to help your adjuster prepare a loss estimate. This includes a written inventory along with receipts, bills and photos, if possible.
- Check with your adjuster before discarding flood damaged items. If local authorities require disposal of these items for health or safety reasons, photograph them first for your records.
- Understand that flood claim payment checks from your insurance company are often made payable to both you and your mortgage lender.
- Ask questions. Make sure you understand what forms need to be filled out and when.

Auto Insurance

- Let your insurance professional know the extent and type of damage your car incurred.
- Take pictures of the damaged car. The more details you can provide in your claim, the better.
- Move your car to higher or drier ground, if possible. If the car is not drivable?for example, if water got into the engine?hire a tow truck to move the vehicle.
- Ask your claims adjuster whether the car is a total loss. If a vehicle is completely inundated or is exposed to salt water, repairing the car may be more expensive than its actual value. In such scenarios, the company may offer to compensate you for the current market value of the car, minus any deductible that applies.

Businesses, homeowners and renters who sustained flood damages, and whose properties were *not* covered by an NFIP policy, may be eligible for state and federal assistance.

FEMA Individual Assistance payments for housing allowance, contents losses, or moving and storage expenses are available to NFIP policyholders. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) also offers low-interest, long-term disaster recovery loans to homeowners as well as businesses and private non-profit organizations.

RELATED LINKS

- [Issues Update: Flood Insurance](#)
- [Facts and Statistics: Flood Insurance](#)
- [Video: Filing a Homeowners Claim: 6 Steps; The I?'s on Auto Insurance: The Claim Game; How to Avoid Buying a Water Damaged Car](#)

RESOURCES

- [National Flood Insurance Program](#)
- [Small Business Administration](#)

The I.I.I. has a full library of educational videos on its You Tube Channel. Information about I.I.I. mobile apps can be found here.

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