

HOME AND PROPERTY INSURANCE



Having the right amount and type of insurance and well-organized records makes a world of difference after a disaster. Make sure that all your insurance information is in-place and that your policy is up-to-date and coverage is sufficient well before it's needed.

HOME INVENTORY

DOCUMENT

First Contact Your Insurance Agent



Ask what documentation is required should you ever have to file a claim. The likely answer is a detailed inventory list with item descriptions, photos or videos, serial numbers and receipts. Any items without a specific market value, such as jewelry or art, should be appraised by an independent expert.



Then Document Everything You Own

There are a number of home inventory apps that provide an easy and fast way to document your property and securely store the records. Or you can use a spreadsheet (a free example is at: www.uphelp.org) or just write down items on paper. You do not want to rely on your memory after a disaster strikes!

Go Room-by-Room and Inventory All Contents

Note when each item was acquired and what it cost, if you can. Recording serial numbers for more expensive items can be helpful if a theft occurs. Open drawers, closets, etc, and empty containers and boxes. Remember that your attic, basement and garage are part of your property, too.

PHOTOGRAPH OR VIDEOTAPE - As you create your inventory document, take photos or videos with your phone or a digital camera of each room and all its contents. The easiest method is to make a video, narrating as you record. Photograph or film the entire space, including every wall, the ceiling and floor. Describe every item and feature, such as light fixtures and hardwood flooring, to the best of your ability. More detail is better than less.



DIGITIZE AND STORE ONLINE - The most complete home inventory is worthless if you can't access it or if it is destroyed in the disaster. Scan and digitize all paper documents such as passports, birth certificates, titles and deeds, family photos, wills, financial documents, etc. Scan all receipts you have for major purchases. And if you wrote down your inventory list on paper, scan that as well.



Store all your digitized home inventory files, photos and/or videos on-line using "cloud" storage services such as iCloud, Dropbox, Google Drive, etc. As an additional backup, copy all these files on to a USB/thumb drive and give it to a trusted out-of-state friend or relative for safe-keeping, or store it in a bank safe deposit box.



Refresh your home inventory and take new photos or videos at least every two years, or more often as property is added.

INSURANCE COVERAGE CHECK-UP

Ensure that your homeowner's or renter's insurance will fully cover all your property in the event of a total loss. If you don't take the time to buy and maintain the right amount and kind of insurance, you can waste a lot of money and end up without full protection. Remember, when you remodel your home, document those updates and provide that information to your insurance agent in writing to ensure your insurance covers what you currently have. **Don't blindly trust that your insurance company has you fully covered!**

Some questions that you may want to ask your home or rental insurance company include:

- Will my policy be adequate if I have a large or total loss?
- Will it cover the cost of rebuilding my home to its pre-loss condition, including demolition, debris removal and replacement of the foundation and roof to current building codes?
- What if construction costs jump as they often do after disasters?
- What causes of loss are not covered?
- What items are subject to limits or exclusions and for which of these limits or exclusions should I consider adding coverage?
- What can I save if I increase my deductible?
- Is there more than one deductible in the policy?
- Is the deductible waived if there is a large loss?
- Is my Coverage C (Personal Property) for Replacement or Actual Cash Value?
- If Replacement Value is not included, what is the cost to add this coverage?
- Do I have enough coverage to replace my unique or special items such as electronics, jewelry, fine art, antiques, etc, or do I need a separate schedule?
- For how long will my temporary rent and related expenses be covered while my home is being repaired or rebuilt?
- Is there a total dollar cap, monthly cap or time limit on this coverage?
- Is additional Earthquake Insurance worth considering for my home in my area?

MORE INFORMATION
www.uphelp.org



United Policyholders (UP) is a non-profit organization that has been guiding people through the insurance claim process and advocating for policyholders since 1991. UP offers tips, tools and information from previous disaster survivors and from experts on insurance claims, legal matters and the rebuilding/repair process. **UP is dedicated to helping insurance consumers.** UP accepts no funding from insurance companies and UP does not sell insurance.

UP offers several programs to help home owners prepare for and respond to insurance issues related to a loss from a disaster. ROADMAP TO PREPAREDNESS promotes disaster preparedness and insurance literacy through outreach and education. ROADMAP TO RECOVERY[®] provides tools and resources for solving insurance problems after an accident, loss, illness or other adverse event. And ADVOCACY AND ACTION advances pro-consumer laws and public policy related to insurance matters.