After a Disaster: Navigating Insurance

COMMERCE DEPARTMENT

Assess the damage. Start your claim.

Focus on safety first. Insurance can wait until you and your family are safe.

Ask your agent for:

- ⇨ A claim number
- ⇨ Adjuster contact information
- ⇨ Information about temporary housing coverage
- ⇨ Next steps in the process

Step 1: Stay safe

- ⇨ Watch for downed power lines
- ⇨ Be aware of gas leaks
- ⇨ Avoid broken glass and unstable structures
- ⇨ Follow instructions from local officials
- ⇨ Take photos and videos of damage as soon as it is safe to do so.

Step 2: Prevent further damage

Take reasonable steps to protect your property:

- ⇨ Tarp damaged roofs
- ⇨ Board broken windows
- ⇨ Move belongings out of wet areas
- ⇨ Keep all receipts for emergency repairs. Your insurance company may reimburse these costs

Step 3: File your claim

- ⇨ Contact your insurance company as soon as possible
- ⇨ Be prepared to provide:
- ⇨ Policy number
- ⇨ Description of damage
- ⇨ Photos and videos
- ⇨ Temporary contact information if displaced

Preparing for the future

As you rebuild:

- ⇨ **Update** your home inventory
- ⇨ **Store** records digitally
- ⇨ **Review** your coverage annually
- ⇨ **Consider** steps that can help protect your home. Check out these resources from the University of Minnesota has checklists designed to help you understand and prepare for local weather and climate risks. Improvements may reduce future damage and help speed recovery.

Key terms to know

Deductible
The amount you pay before insurance coverage begins.

Actual Cash Value (ACV)
Pays the value of damaged property after depreciation is deducted.

Replacement Cost Value (RCV)
Pays the cost to repair or replace damaged property without depreciation.

Depreciation
The reduction in value caused by age, wear and tear, or condition.

Additional Living Expenses (ALE)
Coverage that helps pay for temporary housing and other increased living expenses if your home is uninhabitable because of a covered loss.

When to call Commerce

Contact the Minnesota Department of Commerce if:

- ⇨ You cannot get answers from your insurance company
- ⇨ Your claim has been denied and you do not understand why
- ⇨ You believe your claim is being mishandled
- ⇨ You need help understanding your rights
- ⇨ You have questions about insurance coverage

Consumer Service Center 651-539-1600
consumer.protection@state.mn.us | mn.gov/commerce