



## Insurance Institute of Michigan

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### RECENT SEVERE WEATHER

### WILL LIKELY RESULT IN INSURANCE CLAIMS

**(LANSING, MI)** Severe weather that hit Michigan over the weekend will most likely result in some residents filing insurance claims. Tornadoes are considered “windstorms” and generally covered by homeowners insurance policies. However, flooding is not covered by a regular homeowners policy but can be purchased through the National Flood Insurance Program.

It is important that the claim process be approached in a knowledgeable and organized manner, according to a representative from the insurance industry.

“Residents affected by the storm want to know their insurance company is responding to their claim,” Pete Kuhnmuench, Executive Director of the Insurance Institute of Michigan (IIM), said. “If the policyholder is informed and organized, the process will move along more quickly.”

If you have a claim, report it to your insurance agent or call your insurance company's claims telephone number. After alerting your insurance representative of a claim, take necessary steps to prevent further damage. Make sure to cover holes in the roof, walls, doors and windows with plastic or boards. Be careful not to risk your own safety in making the repairs, however. Also, it is important to keep an accurate list of supplies purchased for emergency repair.

The policyholder can help by making a room-by-room inventory of damaged property. Important information is needed to accurately determine the value of the damaged or destroyed property, according to Kuhnmuench. For each damaged item, include brand name, model number, age, purchase price, place of purchase and the estimated cost to replace. The Insurance Institute of Michigan has **free home inventory software** available on its website, [www.iiminfo.org](http://www.iiminfo.org).

Also, keep all receipts. If you have to stay at a hotel, your policy may provide reimbursement for lodging and meals.

Talk with your insurance company and Better Business Bureau to find reputable companies for all repairs. Ask the contractor to thoroughly identify the work to be performed, as well as the estimated cost. Also, ask for a warranty on the work.

If you have questions about your coverage or a specific loss, call your insurance agent. However, if consumers have general insurance questions or need help resolving a problem with an insurance company, they can call the Michigan Insurance Information Hotline at 1-800-777-8005. The toll-free service is operated 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Insurance consultants provide consumers with quick access to information on all types of insurance or provide assistance when they have a problem with their own insurance company.

IIM is a government affairs and public information association proud to represent over 90 property/casualty insurance companies and related organizations operating in Michigan. IIM member companies provide insurance to 75 percent of the automobile and 64 percent of the homeowners markets in Michigan. For more information about insurance, contact the Insurance Information Hotline, toll-free, at 1-800-777-8005 Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## **Tips for Filing an Insurance Claim**

The Insurance Institute of Michigan (IIM) offers the following advice to assist with the claims filing process:

- Contact your insurance agent regarding with specific information regarding the damage for your claim. Your agent will report the loss immediately to your insurance company or to a qualified adjuster who will contact you as soon as possible in order to arrange an inspection of the damage. Make sure you give your agent a telephone number where you can be reached.
- If it is safe to access the area, take photographs of the damaged property. Visual documentation will help with the claims process and will assist the adjuster in the investigation.
- Prepare a detailed inventory of all damaged or destroyed personal property. Make two copies-one for yourself and one for the adjuster. Your list should be as complete as possible, including a description of the items, dates of purchase or approximate age, cost at time of purchase and estimated replacement cost. A convenient, downloadable program is available at IIM's website, [www.iiminfo.org](http://www.iiminfo.org).
- Collect canceled checks, invoices, receipts or other papers that will assist the adjuster in obtaining the value of the destroyed property.
- Make whatever temporary repairs you can. Cover broken windows and damaged roofs and walls to prevent further destruction. Save the receipts for any supplies and materials you purchase as your insurance company will reimburse you for reasonable expenses in making temporary repairs.

- Secure a detailed estimate for permanent repairs to your home or business from a licensed contractor and give it to the adjuster. The estimate should contain the proposed repairs, repair costs and replacement prices.
- If your home is severely damaged and you need to find other accommodations while repairs are being made, keep a record of all expenses, such as hotel and restaurant receipts. Some policies provide coverage for “additional living expenses” or “loss of use” coverage.
- If your business has been damaged, and you have business income (business interruption) insurance, it covers the profits your business would have earned, based on your own financial records, had the disaster not occurred. The policy covers additional operating expenses incurred as a result of the disaster, such as the extra expense of operating out of a temporary location.

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