

# PRESS RELEASE

JANET NAPOLITANO  
GOVERNOR



CHRISTINA URIAS  
DIRECTOR

## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

2910 North 44th Street, Suite 210, Phoenix, Arizona 85018-7256 · (602) 912-8456 · FAX: (602) 912-8452  
[www.id.state.az.us](http://www.id.state.az.us)

Media Contact: Erin Klug  
Public Information Officer  
(602) 912-8456

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### Is Your Insurance Ready? September is Arizona Preparedness Month

Part of being prepared for a disaster is planning for disaster *recovery*. That's where insurance comes in. Is your insurance ready?

Arizonans face potential loss or damage to homes and businesses from a variety of natural disasters, including wildfires, severe thunderstorms and flood. Wildfires alone have resulted in over \$200 million in claim payments to Arizona fire victims and over \$2 billion in California.<sup>1</sup> A serious thunderstorm over an urban city in Arizona can quickly amount to millions of dollars in claims. *Make sure your insurance is ready!*

#### ✓ **Get a Check Up**

*Do you have the right type of insurance?* For instance, FLOOD damage is not covered under a homeowners' insurance policy, and homeowners insurance typically does not cover business-related equipment. If you operate a business in your home, or if you need coverage for flooding, you might need to purchase additional insurance. If a disaster forces you to leave your home, you may be entitled to insurance benefits, called ALE or "additional living expense". Check your policy to make sure you have ALE coverage.

*Do you have the right amount of insurance?* The leader in residential property valuation services, Marshall Swift/Boeckh (MSB), estimates that 59% of U.S. homes are underinsured by an average of 22%.<sup>2</sup> "I did a recent homeowners check up myself and discovered I was underinsured," said Christina Urias, Director of Insurance. "It is imperative that home and business owners do a periodic review of insurance policies to ensure sufficient coverage." The ADOI has a [List of Replacement Cost Calculators](#) and a [Homeowners' Insurance Check Up Checklist](#) pamphlet to help you get started. Visit the ADOI website [www.id.state.az.us](http://www.id.state.az.us) or call (800) 325-2548 to request a copy.

So while you're putting together your disaster preparedness kit this September, schedule an appointment with your insurance representative to go over your insurance. "Read your policy, contact your insurance representative, and set a date to review your coverage," said Urias. "Be persistent! Complaints to the Department of Insurance highlight that some agents and insurers do not periodically reevaluate their clients' homeowner insurance dwelling coverage limits."

<sup>1</sup> Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO).

<sup>2</sup> Marshall & Swift / Boeckh, [www.AccuCoverage.com](http://www.AccuCoverage.com)

✓ **Take Inventory**

Take the time to make an inventory of home or business property now so in the event of a loss, reporting damaged or destroyed property is easy and fast. Document the exterior appearance of your property and its contents with photographs or a home video tour and store the video in a safe place, away from home. “An inventory of your personal belongings can help determine the level of coverage you need and will greatly facilitate claim settlement in the event of a loss,” said Urias. Visit [www.iii.org](http://www.iii.org) for a free home inventory tool.

✓ **Defend your space**

Clear a “defensible area” around your home and consider other fire prevention actions in your landscaping and maintenance plans, especially if you live in an area prone to natural disaster. Visit [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) and [www.ibhs.org](http://www.ibhs.org) for tips.

✓ **Practice your evacuation plan  
(and check your smoke detectors and dryer vent hoses!)**

Take a few minutes to review and rehearse your evacuation plan. Check the batteries in your smoke detectors and clean out your dryer vent hose. These preventative steps can save lives.

In case of evacuation,  
**Remember the 4 P's:**

✚ **Papers**

✚ **Pets**

✚ **Prescriptions**

✚ **Pictures**

**Preparedness Resources**

For *insurance preparedness* tips contact:

Arizona Department of Insurance – [www.id.state.az.us](http://www.id.state.az.us)

Home Replacement Cost Calculators – [www.id.state.az.us](http://www.id.state.az.us)

Flood Insurance – [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov)

Arizona Insurance Information Association – [www.azinsurance.org](http://www.azinsurance.org)

Insurance Information Institute – [www.iii.org](http://www.iii.org)

Independent Insurance Agent & Brokers of America – [www.iiaba.org](http://www.iiaba.org)

For *prevention and preparedness* tips contact:

Institute for Business and Home Safety – [www.ibhs.org](http://www.ibhs.org)

Firewise Communities – [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)

Arizona Red Cross – [www.arizonaredcross.org](http://www.arizonaredcross.org)

Arizona Division of Emergency Management – [www.az211.com](http://www.az211.com)