



News Release

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OFFICIALS URGE VERMONTERS TO GET FLOOD INSURANCE BEFORE SEPT. 30

Residents Urged To Avoid Potential Delays In Signing Up

BURLINGTON, Vt. – In the wake of spring flooding and additional flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene, state and federal officials are encouraging Vermonters to sign up for federally-backed flood insurance before the end of the month, when the program is set to expire.

While funding for the National Flood Insurance Program has traditionally been extended by Congress, officials warn that during the period between its expiration and when a new funding measure is approved, residents seeking flood insurance may be unable to acquire it.

“Flood insurance is such a low-cost way of protecting yourself,” said the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Federal Coordinating Officer, Craig Gilbert. “But without the program in place while Congress sorts out the legislation, homeowners and renters may not be able to purchase it. And with the record rain and flooding Vermont has experienced this year, residents will not want to be left unprotected in the coming months.”

Nearly 21,000 communities participate in the NFIP nationwide. As of this year, some 231 Vermont towns and cities were participating in the program, which is administered by FEMA but whose policies are sold through private insurance agents throughout Vermont.

However, some Vermont towns are not enrolled in the NFIP and residents there cannot access the program unless the town joins.

“Vermont has a few dozen communities that have yet to join the National Flood Insurance Program, and some communities that joined but were subsequently suspended, making affordable flood insurance unavailable to businesses and residents,” said Kari Dolan, Vermont NFIP Coordinator.

“As soon as a community joins the program, anyone in that community can purchase flood insurance, even those that may be outside of the mapped floodplain, but are still vulnerable to flooding,” Dolan said. “Joining the program is free; a community would simply adopt and administer a flood hazard bylaw.”

(MORE)

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To join the NFIP, contact the Rivers Program at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation at (802) 241-1554.

More than 25 percent of claims paid are from areas at medium or low risk of flooding. In these areas, NFIP flood insurance can be purchased for as little as \$129 a year for a home and its contents or \$49 for contents only.

Homes can be insured against flood damage for up to \$250,000 and commercial buildings insured for up to \$500,000. Policies can be written to include contents coverage up to \$100,000 for homes and \$500,000 for business owners' contents. Renters can insure their personal property for up to \$100,000.

The average homeowner pays about \$600 a year for flood insurance, which pays claims even if a disaster is not declared by the president. Less than half of the floods in the U.S. result in a federal disaster declaration.

Since 1973, the NFIP has paid nearly \$40 billion dollars in flood insurance claims, helping hundreds of thousands of families and businesses recover from flood events.

Due to the 30-day waiting period, NFIP policies become effective 30 days after the premium is paid and remain in effect for a year.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585; or call 800-621-3362 if using 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS).

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

SBA disaster loan information and application forms may be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-8339 for people with speech or hearing disabilities) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET; Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET or by sending an e-mail to disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Applications can also be downloaded from www.sba.gov or completed on-line at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.

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