

Virginia SCC's Bureau of Insurance: Don't Wait to Prepare for Hurricane Season

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RICHMOND – Did you know that just an inch of floodwater can cause more than \$25,000 in property damage? The State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance (Bureau) encourages all Virginians to review their insurance policies now to ensure they are covered in the event of disaster.

Hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30, which can bring high winds and torrential rains to areas even hundreds of miles from the coast.

“Knowing the ins and outs of your coverage could save you untold stress down the road,” said Virginia Insurance Commissioner **Scott A. White**. “There’s typically a 30-day waiting period between the time you buy flood insurance and the time it takes effect, so be sure to talk with your insurance agent sooner rather than later.”

Whether you have commercial, auto, flood, or homeowners insurance, insurers usually will not adjust coverage once a hurricane or tropical storm is forecast. Additionally, some homeowners insurance policies may have separate hurricane or wind deductibles which they would have to pay before insurance coverage begins.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) partners with dozens of private insurance companies that offer flood insurance policies <https://www.floodsmart.gov/flood-insurance/providers>. Although private insurers may offer other flood policies outside the NFIP in some circumstances, you should check with your insurance agent about any coverage issues and availability of a private flood insurance policy before you buy. In either case, ask whether your flood policy provides coverage for your personal property.

When considering your insurance needs, the Bureau offers several general recommendations to prepare for an insurable event.

- Anticipate complications stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, including emergency shelter shut-downs, travel restrictions, face shield requirements, a scarcity of emergency supplies, social distancing recommendations, and more.
- You should prepare a complete inventory of your personal property, including photographs, videos, and serial numbers, stored in a safe place. The “myHOME

Scr.APP.book” program – a free smartphone app from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners – is a great place to start.

- Write down your insurance company’s name along with all your insurance policies (homeowners, auto, etc.) to keep with your home inventory. You will need their policy and phone numbers in case you have questions or need to file a claim.
- If your property is damaged by a hurricane, get in touch with your insurance agent or company immediately and make any necessary emergency repairs to prevent further damage. Be sure to keep a list of all damage, along with photographs, notes, and related receipts, if possible.

For more information on what to do in the event of disaster, visit <https://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Disaster-Readiness>.

You can also get in touch with the Bureau’s specially trained staff for help with insurance-related questions and concerns:

- Consumer Services Section of the Bureau’s Property and Casualty Division (toll-free) 1-877-310-6560, or in Richmond at 804-371-9185.
- Bureau of Insurance mailing address – P.O. Box 1157, Richmond, Virginia 23218.
- Online at <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/pages/Bureau-of-Insurance>.

For additional emergency preparedness information relating to hurricanes and other types of disasters and hazards, visit www.vaemergency.gov.

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