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CLAIMS ADVOCATE

insurance information you can use



PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS: 5 ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR POLICYHOLDERS BEFORE AND AFTER A MAJOR STORM

Floridians and Texans are no strangers to the wrath of Mother Nature. With the hurricane season upon us, it's crucial to be prepared and informed to protect our interests as policyholders. As an insurance claims expert with nearly two decades of experience advocating for policyholder rights, GlobalPro's team has compiled five essential tips to help you safeguard your community association or business and ensure a smooth claims process before and after a major storm.

1. Review and Understand Your Insurance Policy

BEFORE THE STORM:

- **Review Coverage Details:** Familiarize yourself with your policy's coverage limits, deductibles, and exclusions. Make sure you have the full and complete copy of your policy. Ensure you have adequate coverage for your community association or business including business personal property, income, additional structures or other applicable coverages that may be available. Keep in mind that many associations and businesses have made efforts to minimize rising premium costs, which may have come at a cost of coverage and lower limits.

- **Flood Insurance:** Standard commercial insurance policies typically do not cover flood damage, unless it's bundled or offered as extended flood. If you live in a flood-prone area, purchasing a separate flood insurance policy is essential, however even if you are not in a flood-prone area or required to purchase it by a bank, we still recommend that you consider it.

AFTER THE STORM:

- **Documentation:** Keep a copy of your insurance policy, including any endorsements or riders, in a safe and digitally accessible place; share a link to the digital file folder with business partners, managers or fellow board members. This will be crucial when promptly filing a claim to ensure you comply with your post-loss obligations.

2. Prepare an Inventory of Your Business Personal Property and Photograph the Covered Property

BEFORE THE STORM:

- **Document Everything:** Create a detailed inventory of business personal property, including photos, videos, and receipts, if available. This inventory should include the make, model, and serial number of valuable items where applicable.

- **Digital Backup:** Store your inventory in a digital format and back it up in multiple locations, such as cloud storage or an external hard drive. Share the link to the digital folder with fellow board members, managers or partners.

AFTER THE STORM:

- **Update Inventory:** After the storm, update the inventory of business personal property to reflect damage or undamaged. Photograph the damaged and undamaged property. Avoid creating videos, since they are difficult to review, and the files are large and hard to share. These recommendations will streamline the claims process and increase your odds of receiving proper compensation for damaged or lost property.

3. Secure Your Property

BEFORE THE STORM:

- **Facility Maintenance:** Regularly inspect and maintain the business or community association property to address any potential vulnerabilities, such as roof or window leaks.

- **Storm Shutters and Reinforcements:** Install storm shutters, reinforce garage doors, and secure any loose items around the property to minimize the damage.

AFTER THE STORM:

- **Temporary Emergency Repairs:** Make necessary temporary repairs to prevent further damage. Policyholders have an obligation to mitigate damage, however you also have an obligation to prove your damages. Document temporary emergency repairs with photos and keep receipts for reimbursement and proof of damage. Try to avoid making any significant, final repairs prior to the insurance company's inspection of the damage. Contact employees and interested parties, such as, unit owners to ensure their safety.

4. Document Damage Immediately

BEFORE THE STORM:

- **Preparation:** Have a plan in place for documenting damage immediately after the storm. This includes having a camera, notepad, and contact information for unit owners, if you are handling a claim for a community association. Create a digital file folder and share it with staff that will assist in collecting photographs and documentation to ensure you are organized in the hectic fallout of a loss.

AFTER THE STORM:

- **Thorough Documentation:** Take comprehensive photos of all damage and undamaged property and personal property. Make notes about the extent and nature of the damage, but avoid making assumptions and remember, you are not an expert. Therefore, disclaim your knowledge of damage in your notes and be sure to specify that the condition of the property must be confirmed by an expert. This documentation will be critical when filing your insurance claim. At this point in the claims process, it would be appropriate to hire a claims professional to represent your business or community association's interest. Neither the insurance company adjusters nor your broker or agent can adjust your claim for you; they cannot protect your interest. For community association board members, keep in mind that you have a fiduciary responsibility to your association, much like a business owner does to its partners. If you don't hire a licensed, qualified representative to represent your Association's interest, you are assuming that liability and responsibility.

5. File Your Claim Promptly and Accurately

BEFORE THE STORM:

- **Know Your Policy Details:** Understand the steps required to file a claim, including necessary documentation and deadlines. Most commercial policies sold to community associations and business owners specify a third party that handles the intake and adjustment of the loss on behalf of the insurance company.



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Contacting your broker to report a loss would be a breach of your duties under the policy, if the policy specifies that you are required to report a claim to a third party. Moreover, your broker or agent cannot represent you in a claim, because they are not licensed to do so; they are licensed to sell you insurance, not to adjust losses.

AFTER THE STORM:

• **Prompt Filing:** Contact your insurance company as soon as possible to report the damage and initiate the claims process, however take your time and contact a licensed representative, like GlobalPro, to ensure your claim is filed properly.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Preparing for and recovering from a major storm in Florida, Texas, or anywhere impacted by a Hurricane requires diligence and proactive measures. By understanding your insurance policy and engaging a licensed representative to represent your business or community association will ensure your interests are protected and a smoother recovery process. An experience, licensed insurance expert like GlobalPro's team of adjusters will document your damages, notice your claims, and assist you in determining proper mitigation and recovery efforts. Remember, as a policyholder, you have rights and resources available to assist you in navigating the complexities of insurance claims, but an insurance expert will more effectively manage the process from start to finish. Stay informed, stay prepared, and advocate for your rights to safeguard your business and community association.

Most policyholders make the mistake of immediately filing a claim without first engaging a representative or without any knowledge of the scope of their damages. Provide all necessary documentation and be prepared to answer any questions the adjuster may have, however remember, you are not an expert. Therefore, avoid making any commitments to the scope of damage early on or until you have had the opportunity to fully assess the situation.

• **Stay Organized:** Keep a record of all communications with your insurance company, including dates, times, and names of representatives. This will help ensure transparency and accountability throughout the claims process.

RECENT HURRICANE BERYL AND HAIL STORMS IN TEXAS: A SUMMARY AND INSURANCE GUIDANCE

This storm season has already set a new record with Hurricane Beryl, which wreaked havoc across Texas, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Once classified as a Category 5 hurricane, Beryl brought with it sustained wind speeds of up to 165 mph. The hurricane made landfall on the Texas Gulf Coast as a Category 1, causing significant damage to homes, infrastructure, and businesses. This extremely dangerous, early storm highlights the need to practice preparedness.

Meteorologists have reported that Hurricane Beryl brought with it high wind speeds and also over 20 inches of rain in some areas, storm surge that reached 10-15 feet, and caused extensive structural damage and power outages.

In addition to the devastating winds and torrential rainfall, Texas experienced severe hailstorms during and after Hurricane Beryl. These hailstorms brought down hailstones as large as golf balls (1.75 inches in diameter), causing further damage to vehicles, roofs, mechanical equipment, and agricultural fields.

In the aftermath of such severe weather events, it is crucial for property owners to understand the steps to take when dealing with windstorm, flooding and hail claims. If you received a payment, denial or you are still waiting on your insurance company to respond, now is the time to engage an insurance expert at GlobalPro.

The recent Hurricane Beryl and subsequent hailstorms have highlighted the importance of being prepared and understanding your insurance policies. GlobalPro takes all the guess work out of the process and assists property owners in navigating the claims process more smoothly to ensure they receive the compensation they deserve to rebuild and recover. In more than a decade, GlobalPro has managed more than \$1 billion in damages and the placement of insurance for thousands of policyholders. Protect your financial interests and get GlobalPro on your side.

Recovery Report Live

TUNE IN THURSDAYS AT 11AM ET / 10AM CT



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Ready

An essential component of our pre-loss program is the development of a disaster response plan.



Recover

In the event of a loss, insurance claims are immediately documented, filed and managed.



Rebuild

Essential to a full recovery is the management of documentation, the construction process, lenders and distribution of funds.

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Orlando Regional Office
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Need to report a claim?
Contact our expert team 24/7

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