

# CLAIMS

---

## I. INSURED'S RESPONSIBILITIES

In the event of loss, the insured is required to:

- Give written notice of loss to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) or the applicable WYO Company, as soon as practicable, using the NFIP Notice of Loss form or similar form;
- Exhibit all remains of the property, as required;
- If requested, submit to an examination under oath, as required;
- Provide evidence and documentation to substantiate the loss, as required; and
- File a Proof of Loss within 60 days of the loss, unless this requirement is waived by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The NFIP has a standard Proof of Loss form which the adjuster assigned to the loss may provide and assist the insured in completing. However, independent adjusters do not have the authority either to approve or to deny claims. Adjusters' recommendations for payment or denial are not binding on the NFIP or the WYO Company and are subject to approval and correction by the NFIP or the WYO Company staff.

The Proof of Loss form may be waived on claims for less than \$7,500. In this case, the insured will be required to sign the NFIP Final Report form, which summarizes the loss and claim figures.

## II. PRODUCER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Producers may assign any NFIP Direct claim to an NFIP-approved independent adjuster except:

- When, in major flooding disasters, the Flood Insurance Claims Office (FICO) makes all assignments.
- When an Adjuster Control Office is established.
- When a Claims Coordinating Office (CCO) is established.

Failure to indicate the assigned adjuster on the loss notice, or assignment of an adjuster who is not authorized by the NFIP, will delay the adjustment process and may result in duplicate adjuster assignments.

When it appears that a situation is serious enough that a FICO may be necessary, the NFIP will notify producers and producer trade associations in the affected area (using the broadcast media and press releases) as soon as possible to hold their loss notices unassigned until further instructions are received.

In the case of a WYO Company claim, the WYO Company's producer will follow the established procedures when assigning an adjuster.

## III. SINGLE ADJUSTER PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

### A. Schedule and Notification

FEMA and various Coastal Plans will determine whether a catastrophe event will necessitate a Single Adjuster Program (SAP) response. The National Weather Service declaration of a tropical storm or hurricane event will begin the watch for possible single adjuster response. When the storm is 48 hours from landfall, this will initiate FEMA's approval of the SAP response.

During that time, the NFIP Bureau and Statistical Agent's General Adjusters will be deployed to strategic areas close to where the storm is predicted to strike. At landfall, they will be able to immediately assess the damage impact from the storm. No later than 24 hours after landfall, the WYO Companies will be advised by telephone or fax through their designated Single Adjuster Liaison, as to the areas and state(s) that will be subject to the SAP. At that point, the WYO Companies will be asked to immediately notify their agents of the SAP procedures in reporting the claims.

The NFIP Bureau and Statistical Agent will notify the WYO Companies by telephone or fax directing the companies to have their agency staff submit all flood losses that are reasonably believed to involve wind and flood damage to the State Coastal Plans (i.e., Windpool, Fairplan, Beachplan).

The NFIP will notify all SAP Liaisons of the Claims Coordinating Office's (CCO) location, telephone number, fax number, and address, if the CCO does not co-locate with the State Coastal Plans.

When the CCO is operational, the WYO companies will be notified of all assigned claims. Notice of losses reflecting the assigned adjusting firms will be faxed each day. Once the assignment is made and communicated to each company, the WYO Company will manage its own loss adjustment. However, the Catastrophe CCO will ensure that the adjuster receives a copy of the loss assignments, the name of the WYO Company, and the SAP Liaison telephone number.

## **B. Training**

The NFIP Bureau and Statistical Agent Claims Coordinator and FEMA will annually conduct coordination training sessions, both pre- and post-event, in conjunction with the State Coastal Plans, adjusters, state and local officials, and insurers to train all participants. These training sessions will include regional issues, the State Coastal Plans' procedures, confirmation of coverages for SAP losses, closed without payment (CWOP) procedures, adjuster resources, and duplicate assignments, etc.

The NFIP Bureau and Statistical Agent will continue to provide training for specific problems and situations that may arise during a catastrophe event. FEMA suggests that within the first 48 hours, or whenever applicable, an adjuster briefing should be conducted for all SAP adjusters and adjusting firms to ensure that they understand program procedures.

Guidelines contained in the NFIP *Adjuster Claims Manual* provide details to address particular claims issues. This document is available on the web at [www.fema.gov/nfip](http://www.fema.gov/nfip) under "Information for Claims Adjusters."

## **C. Producer Responsibilities**

1. When directed by FEMA, the producer will have no authority to assign any losses involving a flood policy when

there is a reasonable belief that there is flood and wind damage, and will report the losses on the *combined Wind/Flood* loss notice to the Stationary CCO, with wind coverage information.

2. NFIP/WYO insurers insuring both the flood and the wind loss should not report the combined loss to the CCO, but will assign their own single adjuster.
3. The producers will report their flood losses via fax to the established CCO, along with wind coverage information in every instance except those mentioned above. In all cases the producer should send a copy of the loss notice to the insurer.
4. All separate wind losses insured by a WYO company where a flood policy exists will be reported to the CCO for assignment to qualified adjusting firms at the CCO.
5. Upon loss assignment, the insurer will be advised of the assigned adjusting firm by modem transfer, fax, or mail.
6. These procedures relate to assignment of claims only. Insurers may perform other procedures in accordance with their standard business practices.

## **IV. INCREASED COST OF COMPLIANCE (ICC) CLAIMS**

The producer should become familiar with the ICC aspects of the flood program. He/she can do this by attending an NFIP ICC workshop or reading the NFIP literature distributed by FEMA. Information concerning ICC claims may be obtained from your WYO company or NFIP Direct.