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**Indiana Department
of Insurance**

News Release

Plan Ahead for Spring Flooding!

Indiana Department of Insurance Releases Consumer Alert

Indianapolis, IN, February 18, 2009:

The Indiana Department of Insurance (IDOI) released today a Consumer Alert to better prepare Hoosiers for spring flooding and offer helpful tips for those already affected. “It is important to plan ahead. Spring is approaching and a flood insurance policy normally will not go into effect until 30 days after you purchase the policy,” said IDOI Commissioner Jim Atterholt.

Under the Daniels Administration, the IDOI partnered for the first time with Homeland Security to send a team of IDOI insurance experts to disaster sites to assist consumers in those Indiana regions affected by floods in 2008. The IDOI sent teams all over the state to help victims and according to IDOI Chief Deputy Commissioner John Kissling, the concern voiced most often by the consumer was frustration with not being properly informed about flood insurance and, more specifically, being told that their homeowners’ policy did not cover flood damage. The Consumer Alert below addresses the common questions and problems Hoosiers face with regard to flooding.

CONSUMER ALERT

Flood Insurance

The Indiana Department of Insurance (IDOI) wants Hoosiers to understand the facts about flood insurance.

*Indiana is at risk for flooding year round. Late winter snowmelt and thunderstorms throughout the spring and summer months cause flooding across the state. Property owners and renters need to be aware of these risks and financially prepare for the damage floods can cause. Often times, flood damage is **not** covered under a standard homeowners policy. In 2008, the Indiana Department of Insurance sent teams to assist consumers living in flood affected areas throughout Indiana. In response to some of the most frequently asked questions, the IDOI would like to offer some important tips on flood insurance to help you prepare.*

Will my homeowners policy respond to a flood loss?

- Generally speaking, a homeowners policy *will not* cover flood loss. Some companies offer a Hydrostatic Pressure Endorsement to insure your property for the increased exertion of water on the foundation of your structure, a condition frequently accompanying the rising waters of a flood, however, most of these endorsements only cover *collapse of the structure* due to hydrostatic pressure and do not insure for damages commonly associated with flooding.
- Some homeowners insurance policies provide coverage caused by the backup of sewers or drains, however, most (but not all) sewer and drain coverage provisions exclude backup as a result of flood and most limit payment for loss from sewer and drain backup to varying amounts usually less than \$5,000.
- If you insure certain property (examples: antiques, guns, jewelry, camera equipment, objects of art, etc.) under a scheduled property floater (usually an endorsement to your homeowners policy) these specifically listed items may be covered for loss by flood. Please review your policy to make sure.

Is my car, truck, SUV, or motorcycle covered for loss by flood?

- If you carry "Other than Collision" coverage (formerly called Comprehensive Coverage) on these vehicles, the flood damage to your auto, SUV, or motorcycle should be covered up to the actual cash value at the time of loss less the deductible amount.

My mortgage company told me I do not need to purchase flood insurance. Does this mean I do not need flood insurance?

- Do not confuse any contractual obligations between you and your mortgage company with the flood exposure you may face. Just because your mortgage company does not require you to purchase flood insurance does not mean you are immune from experiencing a flood loss. If there are any conditions that could cause you to experience flood damaging your property, consider how you would pay for such a loss. The NFIP flood insurance policy will provide funds to pay most damages resulting from flood. The question each family must ask is; without flood coverage, will I be able to pay for a flood loss from my own funds?

What is a flood?

- A flood is an excess of water (or mud) on land that's normally dry. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) defines flood to be a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of two or more acres of normally dry land area, or of two or more properties (at least one of which is the policyholder's property) from overflow of inland or tidal waters; unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source; mudflow; or collapse or subsidence of land along the shore of a lake or similar body of water as a result of erosion or undermining, caused by waves or currents of water exceeding anticipated cyclical levels.

What is Flood Insurance?

- Flood insurance is a special policy that is federally backed by the NFIP and available for both homeowners and businesses.
- You can buy flood insurance for your home or **business regardless of whether the property is in or out of a floodplain**, as long as the property is located in a participating community.
- You may buy flood insurance covering up to \$250,000 of flood damage to your home. A standard flood policy will cover structural damage, including damage to the furnace, water heater, air conditioner, floor surfaces (carpeting and tile) and debris clean up.
- For an additional premium, you also may buy flood coverage for limits up to \$100,000 to insure the personal property of your home. The need for flood insurance on personal property is not limited to home owners. Renters and condominium residents should also consider purchasing a flood insurance policy to protect their personal property. Note though, that personal property located below grade or in basements may be more limited.
- Coverage is available for up to \$500,000 for non-residential buildings and their contents.

Plan Ahead — Waiting Period

- Commissioner Jim Atterholt stressed the importance of planning ahead. "Spring is approaching and a flood insurance policy normally will not go into effect until 30 days after you purchase the policy."

How Can I Buy Flood Insurance?

- You can purchase flood insurance for your home or business regardless of whether the property is in or out of a floodplain, directly from your property and casualty insurance agent, or insurance company if your community participates in the NFIP. To find out if your community participates, visit <http://www.fema.gov/cis/IN.pdf>
- Your insurance agent or insurance company also can confirm whether flood insurance is available to you and what it would cost.

How Much Does Flood Insurance Cost?

- According to FEMA, the average homeowners flood insurance premium is a little more than \$500 a year.
- Premiums for flood insurance will vary depending upon your risk level for a flood loss, the amount of coverage you choose, the type of coverage you need and your deductible.

Indiana Flood Facts:

(Source: National Flood Insurance Program)

In the last 10 years (1998–2007), Indiana has experienced nine federally declared flood disasters. For example, in early 2005, heavy rains fell on soil already saturated from snowmelt, resulting in statewide flooding. Ninety percent of Indiana counties were declared federal disaster areas, with more than \$7 million in flood insurance claims paid to Indiana property owners.

Flooding costs Indiana. From 1998 through 2007, total insured flood losses in Indiana exceeded \$39.8 million.

More Indiana residents are now flood insured. Policies across the state have increased nearly 2 percent in the past year, to 28,707 as of January 2008.

However, many Indiana residents remain at financial risk. There are more than 2.3 million households in Indiana (2000 U.S. Census), and 28,707 insurance policies in effect. Only 1 percent of the state's households are covered.

Additional Safety Tips

- For personal safety, identify what storm shelter is available to you and prepare an evacuation plan.
- Make sure you have bottled water, a first aid kit, flashlights, a battery-powered radio, food items, blankets, clothing, prescription drugs, personal hygiene supplies and a small amount of cash.
- If you need to evacuate your home, turn off all utilities and disconnect appliances to reduce the chance of additional damage and electrical shock when utilities are restored.
- Take an inventory of your personal property, such as clothes, jewelry, furniture, computers and audio/video equipment. Photos and video of your home, as well as sales receipts and the model and serial numbers of items, will make filing a claim simpler

For more information on flood insurance, visit

<http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/>