



DISASTER NEWS



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY -- FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE COVERAGE AVAILABLE TO MISSISSIPPI HOMEOWNERS, RENTERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS

JACKSON, Miss. January 2, 2002—In the aftermath of recent flooding from severe storms beginning November 24, disaster officials are reminding residents that they may purchase flood insurance coverage through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

"Year in and year out, flooding is the leading cause of property loss from natural disasters in this country," said Gracia Szczech, FEMA's federal coordinating officer. "But all too often, homeowners and renters learn too late that protection against flood loss is not part of their normal insurance protection package."

Flood insurance is available to those residents and business owners located within participating communities and can be purchased through your local insurance agent. Those located in communities that do not participate in the NFIP, cannot buy flood insurance and are not eligible for full federal disaster assistance. The NFIP is sold through private insurance companies and is backed by the federal government.

"Generally, you can insure your home and all its contents against flooding for less than it costs to insure your car," said Leon Shaifer, state coordinating officer.

Important facts about the National Flood Insurance Program include:

- ***Everyone can, and should, have flood insurance.*** Even if you don't live in a designated flood zone you can purchase flood insurance if your community participates in the NFIP. Anyone can get flooded, and anyone can get flood insurance.
- ***Flood damage is not covered by homeowner's insurance policies.*** You can protect your home, business, and belongings with flood insurance. You can insure your home for up to \$250,000 for the building and up to \$100,000 for the contents.

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- ***Contents coverage is separate.*** It is not automatically included with building coverage. Ask your agent. Renters can insure their belongings, too.
- ***Flood insurance pays even when no disaster is declared.*** Statistically, federal disaster declarations are issued in less than 50 percent of flooding incidents. An NFIP policy will pay for flood damage whether or not there is a federal disaster declaration.
- ***Flood insurance is affordable.*** Your insurance agent can provide you with the premium rates for your property.
- ***There is a 30-day waiting period before a flood insurance policy becomes effective.*** You can purchase flood coverage at any time, but there is a 30-day waiting period after you have applied and paid the premium before the policy becomes effective.

For more information, call the National Flood Insurance Program toll free at **1-800-720-1090**. Names of local agents who handle national flood insurance are also available.

Those affected by the recent severe storms and flooding are reminded that the only way to begin the process of receiving disaster aid is by calling FEMA's hotline, **1-800-621-3362** or **1-800-462-7585** for the hearing impaired.

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