



Addressing Common Misunderstandings about the NFIP Claims Process Post Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria

There is a high-level of concern surrounding common misunderstandings of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in post-disaster areas. The program is tracking and combatting common misunderstandings about the NFIP claims process.

Due to the number of hurricanes this season, does a policyholder have to wait a significant amount of time to see an NFIP adjuster?

The entire insurance industry is searching for qualified individuals to join the ranks of claims adjusters to handle losses from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and future events. FEMA is increasing the fee paid to adjusters to ensure that our policyholders receive the best care possible. To be competitive with other insurance companies looking for senior adjuster experience, FEMA will pay adjusters up to 26 percent additional above the already increased fee schedule to adjust flood claims. This brings NFIP claims in line with other insurance industry companies which have also increased payments to adjusters.

These fee increases for adjusters are temporary and ensure that NFIP policyholders receive the same high-level of adjustment experience of other insurance claimants – the experience they've paid for and deserve.

After filing a flood insurance claim, policyholders should discuss the enhanced claims process with their insurer to determine if an advance payment of up to \$20,000 is available to help begin the recovery process.

Does a policyholder have to pay a fee or a percentage of their insurance proceeds to a third party such as a public adjuster or lawyer, to file a flood insurance claim?

NO. Your flood insurer processes your claim at **NO COST**. This includes the cost of an insurance adjuster. Visit FEMA's resource page on [How to file your flood insurance claim](#) for guidance and additional information.

Does a policyholder have to wait to cleanup until after an adjuster visits their home?

NO. Flood insurance policyholders should be sure to document their damage using photos and/or videos. The policyholder should retain, for the adjuster, samples or swatches of carpeting, wallpaper, furniture upholstery, window treatments, and other items where the type and quality of material may impact the amount payable on the claim. Properly documenting damaged property is critical for your flood claim, so discuss what your flood policy requirements are with your insurance agent and adjuster.

To minimize the growth and spread of mold as much as possible, policyholders should take steps to cleanup. The NFIP will not cover mold damage if a policyholder fails to take action to prevent the growth and spread of mold. Visit the [NFIP cleanup guidelines](#) for more information.

Does a policyholder have to wait until their claim is processed and approved in order to receive recovery money?

NO. The NFIP has [enhanced the flood insurance claims process](#) to rush recovery money into the hands of NFIP policyholders for repair or replacement of flood-damaged properties. The NFIP has directed all of their private insurance partners to:

- Provide advance payments on flood claims, even before a visit by an adjuster;
- Increase the advance payment allowable for a policyholder who provides photographs or video which shows flood damage along with receipts or canceled checks for their out-of-pocket expenses, or a contractor's itemized estimate;
- Waive the initial Proof of Loss (POL) requirement; and,
- Extend the standard 30-day grace period for NFIP policy renewals to 120 days.

A policyholder is encouraged to work closely with their flood insurance company and NFIP claims adjuster to maximize the benefit of this enhanced process.

Can an NFIP policyholder apply for disaster assistance?

YES. Disaster survivors with flood or homeowners/renters insurance are [encouraged to apply for disaster assistance](#). FEMA will be able to determine your eligibility for disaster housing assistance based on the information about your insurance claims.

FEMA may require you to provide evidence that your insurance company denied your claim for the disaster-caused loss as part of the eligibility determination process. If you have flood and/or homeowners insurance and believe you incurred a covered loss, you should file a claim with your insurance carrier.

- Though the NFIP does not cover Additional Living Expenses (ALE), you may be eligible for this type of assistance from FEMA for your uninsured or underinsured disaster-caused expenses or serious needs, including temporary housing assistance.
- If you have NFIP flood insurance, you are not required to provide evidence that your insurance company denied your claim for the disaster caused-loss to be eligible for temporary housing assistance from FEMA. Note: You will still need evidence that you've been denied by your flood insurance for structure or contents losses if you're seeking FEMA assistance for those losses.
- If you only have homeowners insurance that does not cover flood -- and have sustained only flood damage -- you are not required to submit documentation that your carrier denied your claim to receive FEMA rental assistance or financial assistance for real or personal property disaster-caused damage.

When you register for disaster assistance with the FEMA, you **must** tell FEMA about all insurance coverage that you have available to meet your disaster-caused needs. You *may not be eligible* for certain types of FEMA disaster assistance if your insurance provides coverage.

For more information on the NFIP visit: <https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program>

For more information related to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria visit the disaster pages:

- [Hurricane Harvey](#)
- [Hurricane Irma](#)
- [Hurricane Maria](#)