

Buy Flood Insurance Now

Release Date: June 11, 2019

DES MOINES, Iowa –The severe flooding March 12–May 16 affected thousands of Iowa residences and businesses and caused millions of dollars of damage. Floods are the most common and costly natural disasters in the United States.

If you do not carry National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) insurance, now is the time to buy it. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) urges homeowners, renters and business owners to protect their homes and assets from devastating financial loss from flooding before any possible inundation occurs.

The NFIP, the federally backed program that provides most of the nation's flood insurance, has paid out more than \$9.5 million on claims resulting from the March 23 presidential disaster declaration in Iowa. More than 12,000 property owners in Iowa are insured with NFIP.

Flooding is not limited to high-risk flood areas, or Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). More than 25 percent of flood insurance claims paid are for properties outside SFHAs.

Just an inch of water in an average-sized home can cause more than \$26,000 in damage.

The NFIP is administered by FEMA; policies are sold by private insurance agents. The coverage takes effect after a 30-day waiting period – more reason not to delay.

Unlike FEMA assistance, NFIP claim payouts do not require a presidential disaster declaration and can cover damage far in excess of what FEMA help provides.

NFIP insurance is an affordable way to protect investments in homes, personal property and businesses. It can be the difference between financial recovery and devastation. An average flood-insurance policy costs less than \$900 a year. Rates for homes in areas with moderate-to-low risk typically average \$400 to \$500 a



year.

Homes can be insured against flood damage for up to \$250,000, and commercial buildings for up to \$500,000. Policies can cover contents up to \$100,000 for homes and \$500,000 for businesses. Renters can insure their personal property for up to \$100,000.

More than 5.5 million flood-insurance policies are in effect in more than 22,000 communities nationwide.

To be eligible for NFIP coverage, a property owner's town or county must apply to participate in the program and adopt certain ordinances. Nearly 650 Iowa communities have done so. To see if your jurisdiction is eligible for the NFIP, consult local officials.

Survivors who live in SFHAs and accept any grant from FEMA are required to purchase and maintain flood insurance. Anyone carrying a federally backed mortgage in an SFHA must have flood insurance.

For more information on the NFIP, call FEMA's Helpline at **800-621-3362** or log onto www.floodsmart.gov. Enter your home address there to find out the flood risk rating for your area.

The Iowa Insurance Division is available at iid.iowa.gov/contact or **515-281-5705** for questions or if assistance is needed.

