

Why All Homeowners Should Consider Flood Coverage



Most flood claims occur in homes located outside designated mapped flood zones. Flash rains, ice damming, and faulty gutters or window wells can cause a flood. The out-of-pocket expense can be staggering — an average of \$25,000, according to the National Flood Insurance Program.

You can use this [flood cost estimator](#) to see how your costs rise with each inch of standing water in your home. If the expense seems excessive, think about the contents of your basement or first floor (if you don't have a basement). Then consider how much it would cost to have a professional come in to repair the damage. When the water rushes in, you probably have a lot more to lose than you think.

Everything in your basement adds up

Even if your basement is unfinished and you have nothing valuable stored there, consider what else is probably living below ground level:

- Washer and dryer
- Water heater
- Heating, ventilating and air conditioning unit and boiler
- Water softener

Replacing and installing these items can easily cost thousands of dollars. In the meantime, you'll need to act fast to get the water out of your home and dry the area as quickly as possible, before mold sets in. Hiring a professional to assist with cleanup is well worth it, especially if there's a clause in your policy requiring you to do everything you can to remediate the issue.

If you have a finished basement, your flood troubles just got exponentially worse. Make sure to add coverage by endorsement and set your limits high enough to cover the cost of rebuilding the entire basement — drywall, paint, flooring and furnishings. That cost is in addition to the usual household equipment mentioned above.

Don't assume you're safe because you live outside a flood zone

Flooding outside a flood zone can happen. In fact, most flood claims happen outside flood zones. A flash rain, for example, dumps several inches of water in a short amount of time, saturating the ground. Once the ground can no longer absorb the water, it's going to travel to the lowest possible point. If your home is situated on a low part of your property or the grading runs toward your house, you're a candidate for a flood.

Any water that enters your home from the outside is normally considered a flood, so you can't assume that any part of your policy will kick in even if your particular issue doesn't seem like a classic flooding situation.

Contact your insurance professional

Contact your insurance professional for a rundown of your homeowners coverage, and pay special attention to the limits and the exclusions. Also ask about what's covered regarding flood cleanup and remediation. Set your limits high enough to protect your valuables and rebuild if it's a worst-case scenario.

Sahouri Insurance

advocacy@sahouri.com

Sahouri Insurance

8200 Greensboro Dr

STE 1550

McLean, VA 22102

www.sahouri.com



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