

Ounce of Prevention

Insuring Against Flood Damage

(NAPSA)—While most homeowners are insured against fire, wind and storm damage, many are not protected against the most common natural disaster in the United States: floods.

Flooding occurs in all 50 states, and not just in those areas considered to be high flood risk. In fact, one in four flood insurance claims is submitted by someone who lives in a low or moderate flood risk zone. Floods have caused more than \$7.1 billion in U.S. property damage in the last 10 years.

“Too many consumers do not believe they are at risk for flooding until it’s too late,” said Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Michael D. Brown. “People should know what they need to prepare for floods, and that includes flood insurance.”

To help spread that message, the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is sponsoring The FloodSmart campaign. The initiative is meant to teach people how to prepare for floods, how to purchase a National Flood Insurance Policy, and the benefits of protecting their homes and property against flooding. The campaign offers these tips:

- Learn your risk. Consumers can determine their home’s risk profile, access flood maps and get information about community activities to prevent flood damage.
- Protect your property. Consumers can learn from the experts how to protect their families, homes and possessions before the floodwaters start to rise.



Many homeowners qualify for the National Flood Insurance Program.

• Get flood insurance. FloodSmart’s toll-free number (1-800-427-2419) and Web site (www.floodsmart.gov) provide consumers with flood insurance resources and information, including tools to find an agent and estimate the cost of insurance premiums.

Preferred Risk Policies

Many homeowners and renters in low flood risk zones are eligible for the Preferred Risk Policy lower premium costs. Businesses in these zones can take advantage of the policy as well.

National Flood Insurance

Under the National Flood Insurance Program, federally backed flood insurance is available to homeowners, renters and business owners in communities that adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood losses. Currently, more than 4.4 million flood insurance policies are in approximately 20,000 participating communities nationwide, representing nearly \$637 billion worth of coverage. The National Flood Insurance Program is self-supporting; claims and operating expenses are paid from policyholder premiums, not taxpayer dollars.