

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Melting Snow, Spring Showers Bring More Than Flowers

(NAPSA)—Spring is a time of rebirth when rain renews the landscape, but it can also bring financial loss to those who are not prepared for nature's surprises. Above-average snowpacks, ice jams, frozen ground that can't absorb runoff from melting snow and rainfall, and spring downpours can all increase the potential for flooding.

Homeowners, business owners, and even renters can prepare for floods by doing a little renewing of their own—by maintaining their National Flood Insurance policies. According to experts at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), flood insurance is the best way to recover quickly and fully after a flood.

Homeowners' policies don't cover flood damage. Relying on government assistance when your property has been soaked may leave you with a large debt. NFIP officials note the following reasons why buying and keeping National Flood Insurance is a much better way to prepare for an especially rainy day:

- Your flood losses are covered. You can insure your home for up to \$250,000 and your business for as much as \$500,000. Contents coverage is also available for up to \$100,000 and \$500,000, respectively. If you have sufficient flood insurance, you can literally replace all you've lost without incurring any debt.

- You may save lots of money with a relatively small investment. On average, a \$100,000 flood insurance policy may only cost you about \$1 per day—an annual premium of slightly more than \$350. Compare that to an average monthly payment of \$311 for a 20-year, \$50,000 Small Busi-



When it rains, it pours—and that can pose problems for homes that aren't covered by flood insurance.

ness Administration disaster loan. With the loan, you pay more than \$3,700 per year—ten times as much as one year's flood insurance premium.

- You don't have to pay back a flood insurance claim. For most victims, disaster assistance comes in the form of a loan that must be repaid with interest. Those who would not be able to repay such a loan may receive a disaster grant, but the average grant is only about \$2,500.

- You are in control. You will be paid for a flood insurance claim even if the President doesn't issue a major disaster declaration, which is necessary for most types of federal disaster assistance. Many floods are too small and localized to warrant a major disaster declaration.

To purchase a National Flood Insurance policy, call your insurance agent. Remember, there is a 30-day waiting period before coverage goes into effect. For help locating an agent or for more information, call the NFIP at 1-888-379-9837 (TDD: 1-800-427-5593) or visit www.floodalert.fema.gov.