

Protecting Your Assets

Protect Your Home Investment, Reduce Insurance Costs Simultaneously

(NAPSA)—If this year is anything like its recent predecessors, it is likely to be a busy severe weather season for homeowners.

According to figures from the Insurance Information Institute, Mother Nature has taken a toll on homeowners in recent years. Insured thunderstorm losses in 2010 totaled \$9.5 billion in the United States, making it the third consecutive year in which losses totaled more than \$9 billion.

Thunderstorm losses typically include any damages caused by tornadoes, hail, lightning and straight-line wind.

But as homeowners prepare for the severe weather season, there are ways to keep their property adequately protected from bad weather while also lowering their insurance rates.

“Making your home more storm resistant and purchasing a home-security device are two of the best ways you can reduce your homeowners insurance rate,” said Michael Barry, spokesperson with the Insurance Information Institute.

To reduce the amount of insurance claims homeowners make after a storm, many insurance carriers offer a “loss mitigation credit” or something similar, which reduces a homeowner’s insurance rate for investing proactively to avert losses.

Installing a home standby generator is one way to keep a property safe in the aftermath of severe weather, potentially reducing a homeowners insurance rate, Barry said. Automatic standby generator systems keep the power on when a home’s primary power source goes out, allowing homeowners to run appliances such as air conditioners, heaters, refrigerators, clothes washers/dryers and lights.

Standby generators are viewed by the insurance industry as a



You can help your home and your wallet weather both natural and economic storms.

theft-prevention mechanism. Insurance carriers may award policy premium discounts to homeowners whose property is equipped with a standby generator because it keeps the home inhabited—detering thieves—when the power goes out. Any potential discounts should be discussed with an insurance agent or insurance company.

“In addition to potentially saving a family on insurance costs, automatic standby generator systems keep your home running smoothly when a weather-related incident knocks the power out in the neighborhood,” said Bill Reitman, senior vice president at Briggs & Stratton, the exclusive licensee of Standby Generator Systems by GE. “This not only keeps the family safe and comfortable, but it can also save a family thousands compared to the cost of spoiled food, basement cleanup after a sump pump failure or a hotel stay.”

Other ways to reduce your insurance rate include:

- Retrofitting a roof to allow it to withstand high winds
- Installing a home-security device to discourage thefts
- Adding storm shutters
- Modernizing your home’s heating, plumbing and electrical systems.