

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Renovations Can Make Your Home Less Of A Risk For Insurers

(NAPSA)—Safety features reduce insurance premiums for cars; can they work for homes, too? The short answer is: yes.

According to the Insurance Information Institute, making a home disaster-resistant is one of the best ways to lower home insurance rates.

“Most insurance companies offer discounts to home insurance premiums based on what homeowners do to mitigate against loss,” said Loretta Worters, vice president at the Insurance Information Institute. “For example, there are new-home discounts, mainly because new homes have new roofs, wiring, plumbing and heating, and therefore are less susceptible to fire. But if a homeowner replaces these systems on an older home and notifies the insurer, there is a good chance of receiving a 10 to 15 percent discount on insurance premiums.”

Location, Location, Location

Location also plays a part in risk assessment.

“There are state-specific discounts in particularly vulnerable areas of the country,” said Worters. “In Florida, for example, with the risk of hurricanes extremely high, you can save up to 30 percent on your premium by installing basic shutters. In regions of the country prone to wildfires, insurers look at everything from building materials to landscape vegetation.”

Fire: Disaster's Common Denominator

Fire is one major risk that



Fortifying a home's exterior does more than reduce your risk of loss. It may also reduce your insurance premiums.

concerns all insurers. Therefore, it makes sense that fire-related improvements offer the best chance for a premium discount.

In fact, many insurers even offer discounts to nonsmoking households because of the number of home fires started every year due to cigarettes.

Fortifying the home's exterior is an obvious way to help reduce the risk of loss due to fire, especially in rural areas.

Siding materials with high fire ratings (meaning they resist burning for at least one hour) are preferred, and these should benefit from an interior wall-board that retards the transfer of heat from the exterior to the interior.

Fortifying The Exterior

Remington Brown, P.E. of the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), points to siding as a

critical component of reducing a home's risk factor.

“IBHS recommends a systematic approach to property protection, based on the specific perils to which an individual home is exposed,” said Brown. “Step one is to strengthen a home's outer envelope—notably roof and wall systems, doors, glazed openings and the foundation.”

Fiber cement siding, like James Hardie's HardiePlank lap siding and HardieShingle siding products, is widely used because of its noncombustibility rating and its recognition for use in several one-hour fire-resistance-rated wall assemblies. James Hardie siding is recognized by CAL FIRE for use in Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

In addition to superior fire performance, James Hardie's specially formulated fiber cement has a FEMA Class 5 flood resistance rating and is rated to withstand 150 mph winds.

It's as beautiful as it is durable, too, designed to closely mimic the look of wood.

For More Information

For more information about home renovations and insurance discounts, visit the Insurance Information Institute at www.iii.org or the Institute for Business & Home Safety at www.ibhs.org.

More information about James Hardie's exterior siding products is available at www.jhsavings.com.