



ADJUSTERS INTERNATIONAL

The *right* way to settle claims®

When filing a residential insurance claim, there are many factors that need to be taken into consideration. To help you navigate the process, we have put together several talking points for you to review. Having a full understanding of each of the below bullet points is crucial to documenting, filing, and successfully settling your insurance claim.

If any of these questions give you pause, please feel free to reach out to us for a no-cost discussion about your claim.

General

- How much time over the next several months will you need to put aside to handle your claim properly? How will all those hours affect your family? Your job?
- What is the emotional investment that you will need to commit to the process?
- Can you get paid for your time?
- Are you entitled to an advance from the insurance company? What is reasonable?
- What is your broker or agent's role?
 - Will he/she be adjusting the claim?
 - How many claims has he/she handled?
 - Will his/her role be active or passive?
 - When faced with supporting your position or the insurance company's, where will he/she stand?
- Are you familiar with the forms/practices below and what their request/issuance is telescoping?
 - Request for a Proof of Loss.
 - Reservation of Rights letter
 - Request for an Examination Under Oath.

Structure

- What does it mean when the insurance company recommends a preferred vendor? Who is this vendor working for, really?
- Contractors may tell you they can do what public adjusters can do. Can they really? What is their background and education in insurance? Are they bonded? In many states, like California, it's even against the law!
- What is the insurance company's motivation in preparing a reconstruction estimate for you?
 - The policy says it is your responsibility. Why are they willing to do it? How do they benefit?
- What is the difference between functional replacement and true replacement? Should you care? Why?

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- How is actual cash value determined?
- Can you do the repairs yourself?
 - Are you entitled to the profit that a contractor would typically charge?
 - Are you entitled to the overhead that a contractor would typically charge?
- What are the benefits and the pitfalls of replacing your home versus cashing out?
- Do you have to replace on the same site? Can you buy or build elsewhere?
- Can you collect code coverage allowances if you build elsewhere?
- How quickly can you get started rebuilding?

Personal Property

- Do you need asbestos and lead testing before handling personal property? Will your policy pay for the testing? The cleanup?
- What is the insurance company's motivation in preparing an inventory for you?
 - The policy says it's your responsibility. Why are they willing to do it? How do they benefit?
- Typical residential inventories are 3,000 to 10,000 items. They need to have ages, source documents to support replacement prices, and condition coding to secure settlement. What is the time commitment necessary to prepare your inventory? How will affect your family's lives?
- Should you let the cleaning company take all your stuff and clean it?
 - Can you cash out on some of it?
 - Can you get paid to clean it yourself?
 - Can you ask them to just hold it and estimate the cost to clean and then decide?
- Do you know your policy limits? If you suffer extensive damages, be aware that cleaning companies usually get paid off the top and are protected based on the agreement that you sign (it's in the fine print). You may end up paying them large fees to clean items you might otherwise discard. If you are marginally or under insured, it may come out of your pocket and reduce the amount of money you have to replace your necessary personal property.
- What happens to the items that don't get cleaned or the cleaning company does not clean? Who pays for the cleaning? This is especially important if there is insufficient insurance.
- Who decides what to try to clean? Do you have a say in the matter?
- All items will be depreciated prior to initial payment. How is depreciation determined? Where does the insurance company get its schedule? Can you challenge their schedule? How?
- Losing your diamond ring versus losing a stone from your diamond ring: Are they both covered?
- Marijuana. A crime? Or personal property?
- What are the pros and cons of a lease to own strategy?
- Distinguishing between business personal property and personal property. One is usually not covered!

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- Can you get paid for a personal shopper? An interior decorator?

Additional Living Expenses (ALE)

- What is a comparable standard of living?
- What if comparable is not available?
- What if you are willing to live “smaller?” Do you get anything?
- What is a reasonable period of time for the insurance company to pay for you to rent a home?
- Should you get paid for your gas if you want to go shopping in your old neighborhood? Go to your old dry cleaner?
- What is considered a permanent purchase/replacement of a personal property item and what is considered temporary and therefore covered under ALE?
- Can you get paid to live with other family members in their home?
- Can you get paid to live in a vacation home or rental home you own?

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