



What You Need to Know About Insurance

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TDCI Mission

- The Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance's mission is protecting Tennesseans, empowering professionals.
- Our Consumer Insurance Services (CIS) team works to make sure companies conducting insurance business in Tennessee follow state insurance laws and abide by the provisions of policy language through the mediation of consumer complaints.
- CIS administers approximately 3,000 complaints each year.
- CIS fields approximately 35,000 telephone calls per year, providing education and resources when consumers have questions about an insurance issue.
- Tennessee residents recovered more than **\$17 million** from insurance companies in 2024 as a result of these efforts.

What Happens When You File an Insurance Complaint?

- Your complaint is assigned to an Insurance Investigator.
- The Investigator mediates between the policyholder and the company for resolution.
- Companies have 30 days by law to respond to a complaint from our office.
- In general, complaints are confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone other than the complainant and the involved carrier.
- Generally, complaints can be filed for insurance policies that were written in Tennessee.
- Complaints can be filed using our online complaint form at tn.gov/insurance or by mail, email, fax, or walk-ins.
- All complaints must be in writing.

Tips for Purchasing Insurance Products

- Before purchasing any insurance product, visit tn.gov/insurance or call CIS at 615-714-2218 to make sure the company and/or agent are licensed in the state of Tennessee.
- Verify an agent's license in Tennessee.
- Look up complaint data to see how well the company is responding to consumer issues at naic.org/index_consumer.htm.
- Read the policy so you will know and understand its provisions before you have to file a claim.
- Read the Exclusions portion of the policy to see what is not covered.
- When purchasing insurance, compare benefits of multiple companies. Visit tn.gov/insurance to see recent rate increases.

Homeowners Insurance

- When Homeowners insurance can protect you in the instance of:
 - Burglary
 - Fire
 - Burst pipes
 - Tornadoes
 - Strong winds
 - Winter weather
 - Hail
 - Lightning
 - Vandalism
- It does not cover damages from floods or earthquakes.

Mitigation

- Some accidents can be prevented by taking some simple efforts.
 - Change air vent filters and clean dryer filters regularly.
 - Change batteries in the smoke alarms twice a year.
 - Make sure all stair railings are secure.
 - Never leave a hot stove or space heater unattended.
 - Clean the gutters to prevent clogging.
 - Check your water heater for leaks.
 - Trim tree branches close that are to your house or fence.
 - Reseal your deck and fence to avoid damage to the wood.

Update Your Insurance Policies

- Homeowner's Insurance:
 - What was once worth \$100,000 may be worth much more today. Take a look at your policy to make sure your assets are covered appropriately.
 - If you've added to your home, inform your insurance agent or insurer of any changes made to your property.
 - Keep inventory of everything you own in your home, especially valuable possessions. This is useful for you and your insurance companies in the event of a loss.

Earthquake Insurance

- Tennessee sits on two major fault lines: Eastern Tennessee Seismic Zone and New Madrid Seismic Zone.
- Deductibles for earthquake insurance are a percentage, usually 10-20% of the coverage limit.
- Earthquake insurance covers:
 - Repairs needed due to earthquake damage.
 - The cost to remove debris.
 - Extra living expenses while your home is being rebuilt or repaired.
 - Structures not attached to your home, such as a garage and personal property, depending on the policy.

Flood Insurance

- Approximately 50% of flood claims come from properties outside high-risk flood zones and receive one-third of federal disaster assistance for flooding.
- Flood insurance:
 - **covers** the structure of the building, such as electrical and plumbing systems, furnaces, water heaters, and built-in appliances.
 - **can cover** properties on hillsides damaged by mudflow caused by flooding.
 - **does not** cover contents of the home. A supplemental flood policy could be purchased to cover these items.
- There is a 30-day waiting period from the date of purchase before a new flood policy goes into effect.
- The **cost** of each policy depends on a number of factors.

After A Weather Disaster

- Contact your insurance company as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Check with your agent to see if you have additional living expenses to cover your stay in a hotel or other living arrangements while your home is damaged.
- Take pictures of the damage and send them to your insurance company.
- Put tarp over any holes in the roof or windows to prevent more rain from coming in the home.
- After you file your claim, your insurance company will send a claims adjuster to your home to assess the damage at no cost to you.
- **Dissatisfied? Upset? File a complaint.**

Use Caution When Hiring a Contractor

- Before hiring a contractor for home repair, modifications, and renovations, visit verify.tn.gov to make sure the contractor is properly licensed.
- Get at least three bids and check references.
- Never pay more than one-third down before the work is completed.
- Make sure the contractor is insured to cover workers' compensation, damage and general liability.
- It is a common practice for unlicensed individuals to pose as contractors, law enforcement, adjusters, charities, and others after weather disasters. Always request proof of licensure for your own verification purposes.

Contact Us

Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance

Insurance Division

Consumer Insurance Services

500 James Robertson Parkway

Davy Crockett Tower

Nashville, TN 37243

615-741-2218

www.tn.gov/insurance