



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** - April 15, 2011

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**BASIC HOME INSURANCE DOES NOT COVER FLOOD DAMAGE:**  
*What Consumers Need to Know Before Flood Waters Rise*

***Is your neighborhood at risk from flood? Have you assumed that your homeowners or renters policy will replace your possessions if they are lost or damaged by a flood?***

The Colorado Division of Insurance reminds people to take stock of their belongings and check their insurance policies before the water starts to rise in their neighborhood. Spring and summer are peak times for floods, and flood insurance has a 30 day waiting period before it takes effect, so the time to review your policy is now.

According to Kevin Houck, Senior Engineer with the Colorado Water Conservation Board, a number of major watersheds are showing signs of very high snowpack, including Upper Colorado at 128%; South Platte at 123%; North Platte at 137%; Yampa/White at 130%; and Gunnison at 115%.

“These are very high numbers for major watersheds,” Houck said, adding that some smaller sub-watersheds within these can have even higher readings. “These high snowpack numbers will increase the risk of snowmelt flooding in these areas.”

Houck stressed that it’s impossible to predict if and when there will be a flood, and even with the slightly higher-than-average snowpack numbers, it’s possible Colorado could have an uneventful spring as far as floods.

Although many people assume that heavy rain may be the first warning sign, Houck said the presence of a “trigger event” that melts snow rapidly, such as a 5-day hot spell, can turn any level of snowpack into major flooding. Without the trigger event, snow could melt slowly and provide a well-behaved runoff. “These trigger events are impossible to predict 45-60 days before the runoff season reaches its peak,” Houck said.

Of great concern in terms of elevated risk are those areas below burn scars, particularly the Fourmile Canyon. There is an elevated risk for flooding in these watersheds. Soil which has lost the protection of trees, roots and vegetation can no longer contain runoff from rain and drainage water in the way it did before the fire. Until a damaged area is stabilized and vegetation takes root again, the risk of debris flows and flooding can endanger people and property around and below the burn area.

## **Do You Have Flood Coverage?**

Floods – or an excess of water (or mud) on normally dry land – are not covered by a typical homeowners or renters policy. Many homes in Colorado may be eligible for coverage under the [The National Flood Insurance Program](#) (NFIP). The NFIP offers flood insurance policies for homeowners or renters in communities that participate in the federal program. There is a 30-day waiting period after the purchase of a flood insurance policy before the coverage kicks in, so take that into consideration when determining if and when to purchase coverage.

Another danger of flooding that is not generally covered in a typical homeowners or renter's policy is mold. Flood waters can be the source of mold damage long after the mess has been cleaned up. If you are concerned with this kind of damage, check your current policy closely to see if it includes coverage for mold caused by flooding. If it does not, contact your agent to find out what options are available. Many insurance companies offer coverage for an additional premium.

## **Do You Have a List of Your Furnishings and Belongings?**

A home inventory can help you determine the types and level of coverage you need before disaster strikes. And after a major loss, the home inventory list can assist you in filing a claim.

There are several simple ways to start building a home inventory. You can download a home inventory spreadsheet [here](#) that will help get you started. If you are using an electronic or paper spreadsheet, remember to take pictures of your belongings, and save them in the same place as the home inventory. Consider storing a copy of these documents in a location other than your home or electronically online.

## **More Information**

For more information about the NFIP and flood insurance, call 1-800-427-4661. The Colorado Division of Insurance can answer questions about creating a home inventory list or a disaster preparedness plan. Call the Consumer Affairs section at (303) 894-7490 Consumer Information and (800) 930-3745 Toll Free for calls from outside Denver.

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