



MIKE CHANEY
Commissioner of Insurance
State Fire Marshal

LEE HARRELL
Deputy Commissioner

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
Mississippi Insurance Department

1001 Woolfolk Building (39201)
Post Office Box 79
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0079
(601) 359-3569
www.mid.state.ms.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mike Chaney, Commissioner of Insurance/State Fire Marshal
Mississippi Insurance Department
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For additional information, please contact
Donna J. Cromeans, Public Relations Director 601-359-3569

MID URGES COAST HOMEOWNERS TO DOCUMENT KATRINA REPAIRS BEFORE EVACUATING

Jackson – When packing up to evacuate the coast Mike Chaney, Mississippi Commissioner of Insurance urges homeowners to include receipts, contractor invoices and photographs documenting completed repairs at their houses from Katrina damage in their important documents package.

“As Gustav continues to intensify so does the potential of more severe damage along the Coast,” said Chaney. “Having those documents can help make sure homeowners are eligible to collect insurance for any new damage that may occur.”

He added that a dated video is best to document repairs already completed, and will help avoid delays in filing a new claim.

The Mississippi Insurance Department (MID) has prepared a special Hurricane Gustav page on its website with tips of what to do both before and after a storm. Among the before the storm tips are the following:

- For personal safety, identify what storm shelter is available to you and prepare an evacuation plan. Choose two meeting places: one right outside your home; and one outside your neighbor hood in case you can't return home.
- Make sure you have bottled water, a first aid kit, flashlights, a battery-powered radio, non-perishable food items, blankets, clothing, prescription drugs, eyeglasses, personal hygiene supplies, and a small amount of cash or traveler's checks.
- Make a plan for your pets. Not all emergency shelters will take pets. Check with your local veterinarian for help with a plan.
- If you need to evacuate your home, turn off all utilities and disconnect appliances.
- Take proactive steps to protect your property from loss. Install storm shutters or cover windows prior to a hurricane. Be sure there is no loose siding on your home and no damaged or diseased trees growing over your home.

- Move all of your important documents to a safe location. Take them with you when you evacuate or store them in a safe deposit box outside the area.
- Take an inventory of your personal property, such as clothes, jewelry, furniture, computers and audio/video equipment. Photos and video of your home, as well as sales receipts and the model and serial numbers of items, will make filing a claim simpler.
- Leave a copy of your inventory with friends or relatives, e-mail it to yourself, and/or store it in a safe location. In addition, add insurance information to your inventory information - the name of your company and agent, policy number and contact information.

As they are received from the companies, the MID will be posting claims reporting numbers on the website as well and is preparing to man Consumer Hotlines for extended hours to assist in filing claims and answer questions. The MID Coast Office is mobilized and will be available to answer consumer questions and offer assistance in filing claims.

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