



For Immediate Release

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30 DAYS TO HURRICANE SEASON MID ADVISES- PREPARE NOW WITH FLOOD INSURANCE

Jackson, MS – June 1 is the beginning of hurricane season. Commissioner of Insurance Mike Chaney urges Mississippi residents to begin protecting themselves now.

“In addition to knowing your personal safety precautions, now is the time to get or renew your flood insurance policy. It typically takes 30 days from the time of purchase for a policy to become effective. This year’s preparation clock is ticking,” Chaney said.

Statewide the number of flood insurance policies in force is down 5% from 2008, with just 74,895 total policies in MS, according to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Coastal counties have seen a drop of just over 20% from last year. There are 9,251 policies in Hancock County, down 6% from 2008. The number in Harrison County is 20,959 policies down 9% from 2008. Jackson County has 19,530 policies, down 5.5% from 2008.

NFIP officials say a drop off in policies now is similar to what they saw following the active 2004 Hurricane season. One reason is if a property owner applied for FEMA assistance after Katrina, FEMA paid for a flood insurance policy for three years. After three years, the property owner is then responsible for paying for the policy and some have either chosen not to rebuild, moved or sold the property. If the property is sold, the flood insurance policy goes with the property and not the policyholder. A new property owner may not be aware they are responsible for policy. Other factors may include foreclosures and the current economic situation.

According to FEMA, past hurricane seasons have shown that storms can form as early as the beginning of June. The Mississippi Insurance Department (MID) reminds Mississippians that homeowners’ insurance doesn’t cover flood damage and without flood insurance, property owners may have to absorb the financial losses on their own.

“Now is not the time to become complacent regarding flood insurance. Just a few inches of water can cost thousands of dollars in repairs, and in this economy, few can afford that potential drain on their savings,” Chaney said.

A “hurricane season countdown clock” will be featured on the Disaster/Storm page of the new MID website. In the Flooding section of that page consumers will also find a **30-Day Wait Fact Sheet**: tips and messages to help you understand why you need to think ahead about flood preparations; and a **Hurricane Flooding Fact Sheet**: when people think of hurricane damage, they many times only think of wind. However, hurricanes and tropical storms can cause significant flooding in areas not commonly considered to be at risk for hurricane damage. This myth busting fact sheet will give the reality of risks for hurricane season flooding.

Flood insurance is affordable and available through about 85 insurance companies in about 20,700 participating communities nationwide. Flood insurance is available to renters, business owners, and homeowners, even if it's not required by a mortgage. While the average flood insurance policy is around \$540 a year, homeowners can protect their properties in moderate- to low-risk areas with lower-cost Preferred Risk Policies (PRPs) that start at just \$119 a year.

Individuals can learn how to prepare for floods, how to purchase a flood insurance policy and the benefits of protecting your property against flooding by visiting the Flooding section of the Disaster/Storm Page of the MID website and clicking on the [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) link or by calling FloodSmart.gov at **1-800-427-2419**.

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