

Flood insurance is for everyone
- Page 1



Be Proactive to Keep Your Pipes from Freezing
- Page 1



How to Avoid Post-Disaster Scams
- Page 2



Why Everyone Wins with Life Insurance
- Page 4



Insurance Insights

A NEWSLETTER FOR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS OF BCF GROUP, INC.



Flood insurance is for everyone

The recent rain storms that we have had this past year have generated a lot of questions concerning water and flood damage.

Water damage, defined in a homeowners policy, is ‘flood, surface water, waves, tidal water, overflow of a body of water, or spray from any of these, whether or not driven by wind. Included with this definition is water or water-borne material below the surface or the ground, including water which exerts pressure on or seeps or leaks through a building, sidewalk, driveway, foundation, swimming pool or other structure.’ This type of damage is typically excluded under a homeowners policy but is covered under a flood policy.

Also included in this definition is ‘water or water-borne material which backs up through sewers or drains or which overflows or is discharged from a sump, sump pump or related equipment.’ This is also excluded but can be purchased back with a water back up of sewers/drains endorsement.

Flood is defined as ‘a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of two or more acres of normally dry land area or of two or more properties (at least one of which is your property) from overflow of inland or tidal waters, unusual and rapid accumulation or



runoff of surface waters from any source and mudflow.’

Flood insurance is available for anybody who lives in a community

continued on page 2

Be Proactive to Keep Your Pipes from Freezing

As the temperature drops, pipes that are exposed to the cold are prone to freeze. This is especially true if they are located in unheated areas like basements, crawl spaces, attics and garages. Pipes that run along poorly insulated exterior walls can also be affected by the extremes in temperature.

The continued freezing and then thawing of these pipes can cause the metal to become weakened and break. Water damage caused by burst pipes can result in toxic mold. If the damage isn’t repaired correctly, or isn’t repaired soon enough, it can cause a build-up of mold inside the walls that can make a house uninhabitable. Keep in mind that your homeowner’s policy covers damage from burst pipes, but most likely not related damage from mold.

continued on page 3

Welcome to the BCF Group, Inc. Newsletter! ●●●●●

Thank you for choosing BCF Group, Inc. as your independent insurance agency. I hope that you find this newsletter informative and helpful in determining the appropriate protection for your specific needs. With over a dozen insurance carriers to choose from, we can help you determine which coverage’s and policy best meet your needs to protect you and your family.

If at any time you have any questions or concerns about your coverage’s, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Organizational Purpose:

We care for people–We serve people–We solve, or prevent problems for people – We make life easy for people

BCF GROUP
2101 Oregon Pike, Ste 300
Lancaster, PA 17601
Website: www.bcfgroup.net
Phone: (717) 560-7730
info@bcfgroup.net

How to Avoid Post-Disaster Scams



Homeowners must exercise caution after their homes are destroyed by fires, tornadoes or other disasters. There are many dishonest scam artists and service providers who are ready to take advantage of distressed homeowners. They know that individuals who have just experienced such a great loss due to disaster are in a panicked state of mind. Since homeowners in such situations aren't thinking clearly, scam artists are able to get the money they want. In order to avoid such a fiasco, simply avoid making rash decisions by talking to an agent immediately following a disaster to get a list of reliable service providers. When disaster strikes, this will make it easier to know who to turn to. In addition to obtaining a list from an agent, consider the following tips for hiring service providers.

Builders & Roofers

Avoid rushing when hiring a builder or roofer. It's better to obtain business cards and written estimates from several service providers before making a decision. Make sure to ask for references and check them. Research the track records of the companies or individuals being considered for the job. It's best to use professionals who have good reputations. One way to find a list of such individuals is to contact the Better Business Bureau. Individuals earn a place on this list by being honest and providing quality work. One scam that is common in building and roofing involves a service worker asking for an extremely large deposit to begin working. After starting the job, the individual or company will disappear. Never do business with

anyone who asks for a large sum of money upfront.

It's also important to beware of contractors who are pushy about spending a lot of money for temporary repairs. The purpose of temporary repairs is to provide a cheap and temporary fix. Payments for temporary repairs are covered in the total settlement from the insurance company. Homeowners who pay service providers large amounts of money for temporary repairs usually find that they don't have enough to cover the cost of permanent repairs. A good service provider will offer reasonable rates for temporary and permanent repairs. Whether obtaining temporary or permanent work, be sure to keep receipts for services received in a safe place. Always ask an agent when in doubt about repair quotes.

Attorneys & Public Adjusters

Never make hasty decisions about hiring someone to handle an insurance claim. It's especially important to be careful about individuals who offer their services by door-to-door soliciting following a catastrophe. Never let any company or individual use scare tactics to encourage a quick signature for immediate services. If such people surface in the aftermath of a disaster, they will likely victimize anyone who is willing to agree to their terms. These individuals usually offer quick or immediate service, which homeowners feel desperate for after a disaster. However, their efforts to make quick money usually leave victimized homeowners without enough money to pay for permanent repairs. Keep in mind that quality repairs take time to obtain after a major disaster.

Another thing to remember is that it's best to settle a claim directly with the insurance company before considering using the services of a public adjuster or attorney. Insurance companies provide their adjuster's services to policyholders for free. Be sure to ask an agent to help with filing a claim, and never hesitate to ask questions. Individuals who agree to work directly with the insurance company still retain the right to hire a third-party professional for help, so there is nothing to lose by

working directly with the insurance company. If the claim is complicated and the services of an attorney are desired, make sure the individual selected is qualified. Ask around the community for advice about which attorneys are best. Another place to check for reliable advice about which attorneys are reliable is the county's Bar Association. Keep in mind that attorneys ask for about 30 percent of the settlement, and public adjusters usually require 15 percent. The key idea to remember after any disaster is to contact BCF Group, Inc. before making any decisions.

continued from page 1 ... Flood insurance is for everyone

that participates with the National Flood Insurance Program. Everybody is in a flood zone with most of us being in a non-special flood hazard area. In these area's, your mortgage lender does not require flood insurance and most likely you will qualify for a Preferred Flood policy.

The Preferred Flood policy packages building and contents coverage together at a reduced rate. The annual premium for this type of policy is typically under \$400 a year and there is a 30 day waiting period before coverage will start.

For those who live near rivers, streams or large bodies of water, there is the special flood hazard area. In this area, your mortgage lender will require that you purchase flood insurance which would be through a Standard Flood policy. The Standard policy charges a separate premium for both building and contents coverage and premiums vary based on your proximity to the source of flooding.

For more information concerning flood insurance, you can contact our office or go to FEMA's website at [HYPERLINK "http://www.floodsmart.gov"](http://www.floodsmart.gov) www.floodsmart.gov.

continued from page 4 ... Why Everyone Wins with Life Insurance

Parents With Grown Children

It's best for parents with grown children to make sure they leave enough money that their children will be able to pay their final expenses. Married parents with grown children must still consider the needs of their spouses.

Single Individuals

Although many singles think they don't need life insurance, this coverage is beneficial to have. Surviving parents, siblings or other

acquaintances may benefit from the money. Aging parents may need extra money for health care. For example, parents who inherit this benefit may be able to afford a private room instead of a shared room in a nursing home.

There are several reasons for any person to purchase life insurance. Even those who have no family members and few friends still have values that are important to them. In these cases, it's helpful and satisfying to set up a life insurance benefit amount to go to a preferred charity. To learn more about life insurance and what options are best, contact us at 717-560-7730.

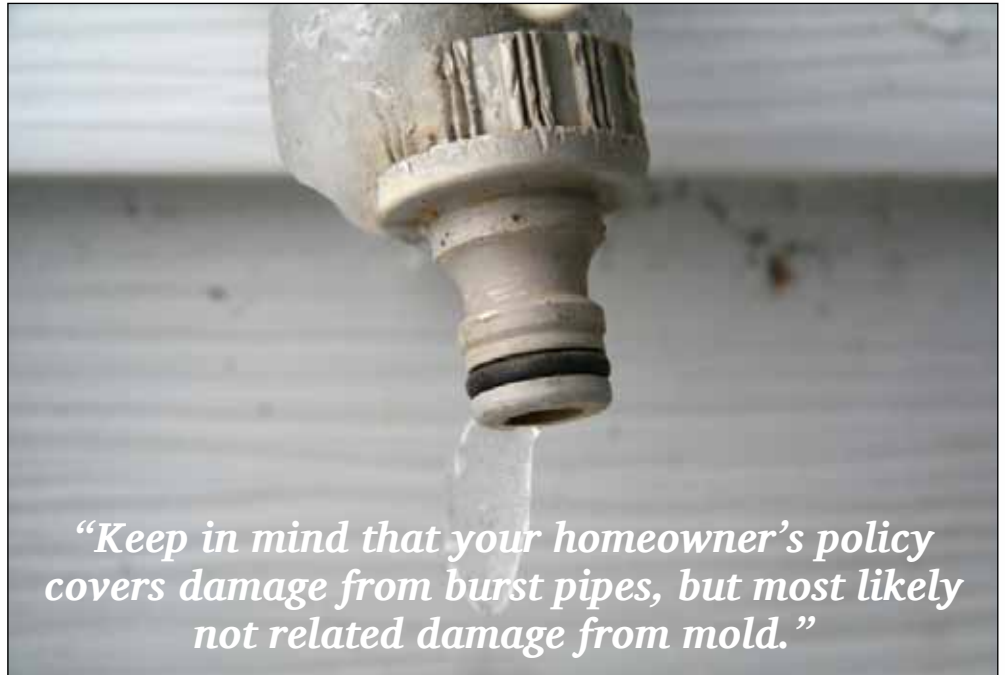


continued from page 1 ... Be Proactive to Keep Your Pipes from Freezing

The best way to keep from being in this situation is to be proactive and prevent pipes from freezing:

- Install adequate insulation in outside walls that have pipes running along side them, under the floors above the basement, and above the attic ceiling.
- Disconnect the garden hose before the cold weather begins.
- Wrap exposed pipes with insulating sleeves.
- Seal foundation cracks in crawlspaces that could let cold air in that will cause pipes to freeze.
- Open the cabinet doors under your sinks during extreme cold weather to allow warm air to get in.
- Run a small trickle of water through cold and hot water faucets attached to pipes that could potentially freeze.

If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle of water comes out, the pipe is probably frozen. There are some things you can do to thaw the pipe safely. Here are some guidelines recommended by the American Red Cross:



“Keep in mind that your homeowner’s policy covers damage from burst pipes, but most likely not related damage from mold.”

- Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt more ice in the pipe.
- Apply heat to the section of the pipe that is frozen by using either an electric heating pad that is wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable electric space heater, or by wrapping the pipe in towels that have been soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or other open flame device. A

blowtorch can make water in a frozen pipe boil and cause it to explode. Open flames present serious fire danger, as well as risk of exposure to carbon monoxide.

- Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is inaccessible, or if you cannot thaw the frozen area, call a licensed plumber.
- Check all other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, others may too.

Why Everyone Wins with Life Insurance

People who are considering life insurance usually debate whether they need it or not. If anyone will suffer financially after a person's death, that person should have life insurance. This death benefit is meant to help surviving family members or dependents cope with the financial difficulties of losing the deceased's income and paying for final expenses. Life insurance isn't subject to federal income tax.

In order to determine how much life insurance to buy, it's important to consider what surviving loved ones would need if death occurred suddenly. Be sure to consider monthly living expenses, debts and final expenses when calculating costs. These are the essentials. There are also several more considerations. For example, college money for surviving children is a beneficial addition to a life insurance funding plan. Long-term financial goals, a surviving spouse's retirement and several other factors must also be considered. It's best to speak with a qualified agent to discuss

individual needs and determine what amount is sufficient. There are several aspects to consider with purchasing life insurance.

Married Individuals

Many couples who get married don't think they need to purchase life insurance coverage until they have children. However, it's important to know that the debts of one spouse must be paid by the surviving spouse in most situations. For example, if one of the individuals earns the sole income and has sufficient debt, the surviving spouse with the lesser income would face many serious struggles by inheriting such debt.

Parents With Young Children

Whether parents are single or married, it's important to have enough life insurance to cover the costs of child care and care. If one spouse stays at home and cares for the children, it's important to be sure that they will all have enough money



to live on. It's also important to have life insurance for the spouse who stays at home to care for the children. Without that spouse in the picture, the cost of transporting and caring for the children will be an issue. It may also be necessary to pay for housekeeping services. Single parents should always make sure that their children will have enough money to survive on. If possible, it's best to leave extra money to contribute toward their college education.

continued on page 3



2101 Oregon Pike Ste 300 • Lancaster, PA 17601
www.bcfgroup.net • Phone: (717) 560-7730 • info@bcfgroup.net

Insurance**Insights**