

How do I protect my property from a flood?

- 1. Have a plan.** Learn the evacuation routes in your community and designate a point of contact outside of the U.S. Virgin Islands, in the event your family is separated. If you are staying in your home during a flood event, go to the highest level of your home. If you are outdoors, move to higher ground and take shelter, if necessary.
- 2. Prepare your home.** Move items you want to protect from the floor and unplug electric items.
- 3. Store your insurance information in a safe place.** Regularly update your homeowners or renters insurance and use the home inventory to keep a record of your possessions. Also, keep track of records and receipts.
- 4. Keep insurance agent and company contact information handy.** In the event of a flood, make contact with your insurer as soon as possible when it's safe. Your policy may require you to notify the company within a certain time frame.

What should I do after a flood?

- a) Take pictures of any property damage.** Try to prevent further damage by cleaning and drying wet items.
- b) File a claim.** Most insurance companies have a time requirement for reporting a claim, so contact your agent or company as soon as possible. The Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation can help you find contact information for your company, if you cannot find it.
- c) Protect your vehicle.** Avoid driving in flood waters. Don't drown, turn around.



For More Information on how to prepare for a hurricane and other disasters:

Please contact the Division of Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation on

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Christiansted, V.I. 00820
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Fax: (340) 719-3801

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Nisky Center, 2nd Floor
5049 Kongens Gade
St. Thomas, V.I. 00802
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Business Hours
8:00am to 5:00pm
Monday to Friday



Visit our website regularly to learn about Banking, Insurance and Financial Regulation services in the Territory.

Website: ltg.gov.vi
Preparation Through Education Is Less Costly
Than Learning Through Tragedy
-Max Mayfield, Director
National Hurricane Center



Credit Dave Davis- From St. Croix Source Newspaper, Frederiksted Flooding

What U.S. Virgin Islands Consumers Need to Know About

FLOOD INSURANCE

Understanding Flood Insurance and What to Do During a Flood

Most homeowners insurance policies do not cover floods. Learn why you may need a separate policy for Flood Insurance.



UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DIVISION OF BANKING, INSURANCE
AND FINANCIAL REGULATION



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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE

GWENDOLYN HALL BRADY
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1.

Flood Insurance is coverage protecting the insured against loss or damage to a dwelling or contents caused by a flood. You must buy a homeowners insurance policy and a separate flood insurance policy.

Why Is Flood Insurance Important?

- The most important thing to understand about flood insurance is what it is not. A flood peril is not typically covered through most standard homeowners and renter's insurance policies. Flood insurance is separate coverage you can buy through an agent or insurer participating in the **National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)** which FEMA manages or in some instances, through a private insurer.
- The NFIP provides coverage of up to \$250,000 for the structure of a home and up to \$100,000 for contents/personal property. If your agent or insurer does not sell flood coverage, contact the NFIP Referral Call Center at 1-800-427-4661.
- NFIP has trained and certified adjusters to determine whether water damage is due to a flood. NFIP has established a legal definition for a flood as follows: *A flood is a general and temporary condition where 2 or more acres of normally dry land or 2 or more properties are covered by water or mud flow.*



Credit Bill Kossler- From St. Croix Source Newspaper, Frederiksted Flooding

2.

Storm Surge flooding is:
An abnormal rise of water generated by a storm, over and above the predicted astronomical tides. Along the coast, storm surge is often the greatest threat to life and property from a hurricane. In the past, large death tolls have resulted from the rise of the ocean associated with many of the major hurricanes that have made landfall.

Storm Surge Flood Facts

1. Storm surge is produced by sea or ocean water being pushed towards the shore by the force of the winds moving cyclonically around the storm. The impact on surge of the low pressure associated with intense storms is minimal in comparison to the water being forced towards the shore by wind.
2. Adding to the destructive power of surge, battering waves may increase damage to buildings directly along the coast. Water weighs approximately 1,700 pounds per cubic yard; extended pounding by frequent waves can demolish any structure not specifically designed to withstand such forces. The two elements work together to increase the impact on land because the surge makes it possible for waves to extend inland.
3. Additionally, currents created by tides combine with waves to severely erode beaches and coastal highways. Buildings that survive strong hurricane winds can be damaged if their foundations are weakened by erosion.
4. In harbors, the combination of storm tides, waves and currents can also severely damage marinas and boats. In estuaries and bayous, salt water intrusion endangers public health, kills vegetation, and can send animals, such as snakes, fleeing from flooded areas.

Storm surge floods from Hurricane Hugo were responsible for an estimated 10 deaths in the U.S. Virgin Islands, most of which were drownings or electrocutions.

3.

It is important to note that an NFIP Insurance policy does not go into effect immediately after you buy it. NFIP policies usually have a 30-day waiting period. Buy Flood Insurance months before June 1st, the start of the hurricane season.

Why Do I Need Flood Insurance?

The **FEMA flood map service** allows you to determine your flood risk. Risk levels are divided into three categories:

- 1) **High-risk areas** have at least a 1 percent chance of flooding each year. Homeowners in these areas with mortgages from federally regulated or insured lenders are required to buy flood insurance.
- 2) **Moderate-to low-risk areas** have less than a 1 percent chance of flooding each year, but there is still a possibility of flood. Flood coverage is not required in these areas, but it is recommended. Some mortgage lenders still require you to have flood insurance in non-high-risk areas.
- 3) **Undetermined risks** are areas where flood-hazard analysis has yet to be conducted, but risk still exists.

It is important to note that approximately 20 percent of flood insurance claims come from outside of high-risk flood zones. Where it can rain, it can flood. According to FEMA, an inch of water in a home could cause more than \$25,000 in damages. If you experience flooding and have not purchased flood insurance, you might experience financial ruin.

If you are told by your lender that you must purchase flood insurance and you want to appeal that request, contact the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources for a review.