

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

What's The Best Time To Buy Flood Insurance?

(NAPSA)—You may be surprised to learn that there's no such thing as a flood season. Every day—in every season—flooding occurs somewhere in the United States.

Floods are the most common natural disaster in the nation, wiping out homes, businesses and personal financial resources. No one knows that better than the residents of the Gulf Coast states still struggling to recover from the devastating 2005 hurricane season.

But flooding is not limited to events such as hurricanes. Flooding also occurs during and after the winter months as a result of warming temperatures. In the past 11 years, all 50 states and territories in the U.S. have experienced a flood event. These include heavy rains, flash flooding, coastal floods, and snow melt. Along the West Coast, the likelihood of flooding is increased during seasonal rains and in the aftermath of wildfires.

While there is no way to eliminate the pain and suffering caused by flood events, individuals and families can lessen the emotional and financial toll from flooding by purchasing flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP is managed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA recommends that property owners purchase flood insurance whether they live in or outside of high-risk flood areas. One out of every four flood-loss claims is filed in a low- to moderate-risk area. Flood insurance is available to any property owner located in a



Every season has flood risks so it's not prudent to put off buying flood insurance.

community participating in the NFIP.

Coverage Is Affordable

Flood insurance provides financial security at an average annual cost of approximately \$500. For people living in low- to moderate-risk areas, coverage may be purchased for as little as \$112 a year.

Flood Insurance Is Easy to Get

About 100 private insurance companies and 20,000 independent insurance agents offer the coverage. People without insurance agents can call (800) 427-2419 to locate an agent.

Coverage for Businesses

NFIP coverage is not only for homeowners. Businesses can purchase coverage for buildings and their contents, including equipment. Homeowners and renters may purchase separate policies to insure personal property.

Don't Delay

Flood insurance coverage usually doesn't begin until 30 days after the purchase date. For more information, visit www.FloodSmart.gov.