

Homeowners Insurance Checklist

BEFORE YOU START LOOKING FOR A HOME

Put yourself in the best possible position to be able to afford a home, receive the lowest possible mortgage rate and get insurance for your new house. This takes advance preparation on your part.

- Check your credit rating
- Check your home insurance claims-filing history

HOUSE HUNTING

As you look at homes, remember that characteristics of the house can send your insurance rates up or down.

- Construction of the house
- Age of the house
- Condition of roof and home
- Plumbing, heating and electrical systems
- Safety devices
- Pool, wood burning stove, etc.
- Quality and proximity of the fire department
- Location, location, location

PLACING A BID

You have looked at a number of properties and are narrowing your search to a few homes. Now you need to get more specific information on the house and its insurability.

- Check the house's loss history report
- Get the house inspected
- Shop around for the best coverage

PURCHASING THE HOUSE AND INSURANCE

Congratulations, you are set to purchase your new home. Now you want to be sure you are getting the right insurance coverage at the lowest possible price.

- Take the highest deductible you can afford to keep premiums low
- Ask about available discounts for:
 - Earthquake retrofitting to make the home safer
 - Upgrades to plumbing, heating and electrical systems
 - Deadbolt locks and fire-safe window grates
 - Burglar and fire alarms that alert an outside service
 - Long-time policyholder
 - Smoke detectors
 - Multipolicy
 - Wind-resistant shutters
 - 55 years old and retired
 - Fire extinguishers
 - Sprinkler systems
- Get enough insurance to:
 - Completely rebuild the house in the event it is destroyed by fire or other insured disasters
 - Replace everything in the house
 - Protect your liability in case someone is injured on your property and sues you
- Ask about additional coverage such as:
 - Replacement cost for possessions
 - Building code upgrades
 - Extended or guaranteed replacement cost for the structure
 - Sewer and drain back-ups
 - Special riders for jewelry, collectibles and expensive items
 - Umbrella coverage for a pool or other high-risk items
 - Inflation-guard
- Consider separate coverage for flood, earthquake and windstorm risk

AFTER YOU PURCHASE YOUR NEW HOME

- Properly maintain the house
- Keep insurance up-to-date