



PAT QUINN

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NEWS

Illinois Department of Insurance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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State Department of Insurance to Offer Additional Counseling to Storm Victims in Harrisburg

DOI to Help Southern Illinois Homeowners with Insurance Claims

SPRINGFIELD - March 20, 2012. The Illinois Department of Insurance (DOI) will offer additional free, one-on-one counseling services on Thursday, March 22 to residents of Harrisburg affected by last month's destructive tornado. Counselors will walk individuals the insurance claims process, as well helping them avoid fraud. DOI staff will provide information on how to properly document storm damage, what a consumer's homeowner policy covers, assess the benefits of making temporary repairs, and offer advice on what to expect during the claims process. The counseling session will take place:

**Thursday, March 22
12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Harris-Pruett Community Building
107 E. Church
Harrisburg, IL**

Governor Pat Quinn issued a state disaster proclamation after a tornado devastated parts of southern Illinois on Feb 29. He directed the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) to activate the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Springfield to coordinate state assistance with cleanup and recovery efforts. The Governor requested federal assistance to help the people and businesses that suffered losses from the tornado and is appealing FEMA's denial for federal disaster aid.

The Department of Insurance is also alerting property owners of individuals selling services or benefits that sound or appear "too good to be true," and offers the following advice to consumers:

- Property owners should always contact the Department of Insurance before entering into an insurance contract or formal agreement that raises questions or suspicion.
- Illinois law requires public adjusters (or insurance adjusters who are not employed by a particular insurance company) to be licensed with the Department of Insurance. Contact the Department at its toll-free number (866) 445-5364 to verify that a public adjuster is licensed and in good standing before signing any contract.
- Public adjusters are independent operators; they are not public employees, do not work on behalf of the State of Illinois or the Department of Insurance.

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- The Department's trained staff provides assistance with insurance claims and questions for free. Contact the Department of Insurance to learn more.

Useful information on insurance coverage and on how to handle the insurance claims process following a natural disaster can also be found in the Department's consumer fact sheet entitled "When Disaster Strikes – What to do After an Insured Homeowners Loss." The fact sheet is available through the Department's website, www.insurance.illinois.gov, or by clicking [here](#). A list of agencies and organizations that can help ease the burdens caused by a major disaster is also available on the Department's website or by clicking [here](#).

More information

The Department's mission is to protect consumers by providing assistance and information, by efficiently regulating the insurance industry's market behavior and financial solvency, and by fostering a competitive insurance marketplace. The Department assists consumers with all insurance complaints, including health, auto, life, and homeowner. Consumers in need of information or assistance should visit the Department's Web site at insurance.illinois.gov or call our toll-free hotline at (866) 445-5364.

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