

# Flood Insurance is a Valuable Resource in Washington

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**LACEY, Wash.** – Your house has never flooded. You have a homeowner's insurance policy. You're thinking, "I'm covered."

Maybe not.

Many Washington residents may believe they don't need to buy flood insurance because they don't live in a high-risk flood zone. But flooding can happen anywhere, often to the surprise of residents who thought they were covered for disaster. When flooding happens, the damage is not covered by most homeowners' insurance policies. One inch of floodwater can cause up to \$25,000 of damage in a home.

Flooding in Washington is not uncommon. Yet less than 3%, or 5,345, of structures in Clallam, Skagit, and Whatcom counties are covered by flood-insurance policies issued by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). After recent flooding, 378 policyholders filed flood claims with a total payout of \$16.1 million as of Feb. 7. Floods can affect all flood zones, even those where there is not a requirement to purchase flood protection.

Currently, in Clallam, Skagit and Whatcom counties 4,083 residents live in designated high-risk flood zones, while 1,262 residents do not. It doesn't matter whether the flood insurance policyholders of the NFIP in Clallam, Skagit and Whatcom counties live in designated high-risk, low-risk or moderate-risk flood zones, floods can occur in any zone. Claims have been received in all flood zones. In all, the National Flood Insurance program has 30,443 policyholders across Washington state with total coverage exceeding \$8 billion.

Property owners can protect themselves from financial losses by having a flood insurance policy through the NFIP. Flood insurance coverage is available regardless of federal disaster declarations. Insurance for contents is also available to renters. There is a 30-day waiting period before new policies go into effect, so



don't wait to obtain a policy. The spring flooding season looms.

In Washington, 296 communities participate in the NFIP, and 32 communities do not. Residents can purchase a flood insurance policy if their community participates in the NFIP, no matter their flood risk.

Coverage is available for residential and commercial buildings and the contents therein:

- Up to \$250,000 in building coverage and up to \$100,000 in contents coverage for single-to-four family residential structures.
- Up to \$500,000 in building coverage and up to \$100,000 in contents coverage for five-or-more family residential structures.
- Up to \$500,000 in building coverage and up to \$500,000 in contents coverage for businesses.

#### **How to buy:**

- Contact your insurance company or agent. In addition to the NFIP, flood insurance is also available from some private insurance providers. Please visit [floodsmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) for valuable resources and information pertaining to floods and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- For an agent referral, call 800-427-4661 or visit [fema.gov/flood-insurance](https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance).

For more information about Washington flood recovery, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4635](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4635). Follow the FEMA Region 10 Twitter account at [twitter.com/femaregion10](https://twitter.com/femaregion10).

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