## Lessons Learned from Hurricane Sandy Can Help Consumers Insure Against Future Disasters as Six-Month Anniversary Nears

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**NEW YORK, April 17, 2013** ? Predictions for a severe 2013 hurricane season are a reminder to coastal residents to heed the lessons learned from superstorm Sandy: make sure to have to have the right type and amount of insurance.

April 29 marks six months since Sandy, the deadliest and most destructive tropical cyclone of the 2012 Atlantic hurricane season, made landfall near Atlantic City, New Jersey, causing more than \$18 billion in insured losses and making it the third costliest hurricane in U.S. insurance history, according to the Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.)..

The more prepared you are for a hurricane or other major disaster, the greater the likelihood you and your loved ones will survive the event both physically and financially. As a homeowner, there are four important steps you can take now to protect yourself and your property:

## 1. Review Your Insurance Coverage

The time to review your insurance policy is *before* disaster strikes and you have to file a claim. Make sure that you have both the right amount and type of insurance:

- Amount of insurance. You should have enough insurance to rebuild your home and replace all of its contents. If you have made a major alteration or improvement to your home, get in touch with your insurance professional to update your policy. Homeowners should also find out how much coverage they have available for Additional Living Expenses (ALE). These expenses could include the cost of a temporary rental home or hotel room, restaurant, meals and any other expenses incurred in the event your home is uninhabitable while it is being repaired or rebuilt due to an insured disaster. Some policies provide coverage for 20 percent of the amount of insurance you have on your house. Others may specify a time period. Additional coverage is generally available for an additional cost.
- **Type of insurance.** Ninety percent of all natural disasters involve some form of flooding. Flood damage is *not* covered by standard home insurance policies, but is available from the National Flood Insurance Program and from some private insurance companies. Excess flood insurance is also available from private insurance companies if you need more coverage than the NFIP offers. For more information on flood insurance, see FloodSmart.gov.
- For more information the I.I.I.?s new iPhone app, *Know Your Coverage*, can guide you through the process of getting the right type and amount of coverage for your home and belongings.

## 2. Create a Home Inventory

A home inventory is a list of all of your personal possessions and their estimated value. An up-to-date inventory will help you:

- Purchase the right amount of insurance.
- Speed up the claims process by substantiating losses.
- Provide documentation for tax purposes or disaster assistance.

In order to make the process of creating and updating an inventory easier, you can use *Know Your Stuff*® - *Home Inventory*, *the I.I.I.*?s Web-based software and mobile app. For more information on the process of creating an inventory, see the I.I.I.?s home inventory video and brochure.

## 3. Disaster-proof Your Home

Talk to your insurance professional about ways to keep wind and water out of your home. For instance, you may want to invest in storm shutters and reinforced garage doors. More information can be found at the Institute for Business & Home Safety or the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH).

### 4. Have an Evacuation Plan

Advanced planning is important. Decide ahead of time where you will go and how you will get there, and have more than one option. The I.I.I.?s iPhone app, *Know Your Plan*, provides interactive checklists that will help you plan ahead to better protect yourself, your family, your home, and even your pets. If you have pets, contact your veterinarian for a list of boarding kennels and facilities or ask your local animal shelter if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets. Also identify hotels or motels outside of your immediate area that accept pets. For more information see Protecting Your Pet During a Disaster.

The I.I.I. also recommends practicing your evacuation plan by doing a test run: give yourself just 10 minutes to pack up your family, pets and important items and get out?possibly for good. For a video on the subject, see Ten Minute Challenge.

By taking these four steps now, you will have the best chance of getting your life back in order after a disaster.

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