

Floods Blindside the Uninsured, But Does It Need to Be This Way?

Many homeowners and renters who suffered losses in the recent flooding have discovered that their homeowners or renters insurance did not cover them. They may have already known as much, but they also knew they weren't in a flood zone, so why have flood insurance?

If you purchase a home in a flood zone (as determined by FEMA maps) and apply for a federally insured mortgage, you are forced to buy flood insurance.

However, what if you buy a home that is not in a flood zone? Your lender does not require you to buy flood insurance, but then the unthinkable happens. The rule is that if water touches the ground before entering your house, the damage it causes is not covered by the stand-

ard homeowners insurance policy. Only if water enters through the roof or a wall are you covered. But I have a modest proposal. I propose that *if you are not in a flood zone*, your homeowners or renters insurance should cover flooding if it is through no fault of the policyholder. An example of homeowner-caused flooding would be if the homeowner left a hose running and it flooded the basement.

Such a change, I believe, would be fair, because it would be a rare situation that a home not in a flood zone would experience flooding. Even with the recent losses in our northern counties, surely the major insurance companies could more easily absorb those claims — as they do with covered disasters such

as wildfires — given how all losses are spread out over millions of policyholders. I think most policyholders would be okay, if necessary, with paying a few dollars more per year to have fellow policyholders and themselves covered in such unforeseen disasters.

The insurance industry is unlikely to institute such a policy change by itself, so maybe it would have to be done through legislation. If so, I hope that some legislator will sponsor such legislation.

Be on the Lookout for Mold

Another issue we should all be more aware of following such a wet period is mold. Earlier this year, on May 23rd, I devoted this column to the subject of mold. You can read that column at JimSmithColumns.com. The bottom-line message of that column was that mold, which flourishes on organic material (such

as lumber and drywall) that remains moist for a long period of time, can cause symptoms which are typically misdiagnosed as other ailments. The result is that you might continue to live in a toxic environment (your home) for months or years, treating what you think is fibromyalgia or some other disorder when in fact your symptoms would disappear if you found and mitigated the mold in your house or moved to a non-moldy home.

Symptoms can range from exhaustion, rashes, aches and pains to almost anything else. If you find these symptoms are reduced when you leave your home for a weekend or vacation, that should be your first clue. Check your crawl space for moisture, look up at the joists to see if there are black spots on them. You may have a mold problem, not a health problem. Call me if you want a professional to screen for mold.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

What Does It Cost to Move?

Hiring a moving company, even to move locally, can be quite costly, starting well over \$1,000. At Golden Real Estate, we can help you to eliminate or at least reduce those costs.

In 2004 we purchased a Ford E350 box truck, and since then hundreds of clients — *and non-clients who purchased one of our listings* — have saved over \$250,000 by using this truck instead of hiring movers or even renting a U-Haul. The truck is equipped with moving blankets and an appliance dolly, and we also provide free moving boxes, packing paper and bubble wrap (which most people return for re-use by future clients).



When not in use by clients, we make the truck available to community organizations and non-profits, such as the Christian Action Guild and the dozen or so Jeffco churches which provide temporary shelter to homeless families under the auspices of Family Promise (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network).

The truck is used every 2 or 3 months when our "Styrofoam Corral" fills with polystyrene and we take a full truckload of the stuff to a factory for recycling.

Buy or sell with us, and you can use the truck too!

This Week's Featured Real Estate Listing

Solar-Powered Home in Fairmount

This home at 5476 Joyce Court has both a 9.2-kW photovoltaic system and a 100-gallon solar thermal system, resulting in monthly gas & electric bills under \$100 year round! Located at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac, it has nothing but high-end details, from the epoxy-floor garage to the three master suites and Brazilian cherry hardwood floors. There's an elaborate water feature in the front yard and a plumbed gas connection on the patio for a BBQ. 4-car garage, 2-car carport, and 2-car gravel parking space (also suitable for large RV). Concrete



Video Tour at www.JeffcoSolarHomes.com

curbing is around lawn and larger trees. 10-zone sprinkler system. Best of all, there is no HOA or HOA dues of any kind. The owners are Jim & Rita Smith. Call Jim for a showing!



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