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HURRICANE CHARLEY AFTERMATH

This edition of ISSUES is focused primarily on those FUBA members whose homes and/or businesses were damaged or destroyed by the recent storm. This newsletter updates you on the latest information and actions taken by the State of Florida in trying to provide you with some assistance in rebuilding your lives after Hurricane Charley. We at FUBA extend our most heartfelt sympathies to those of you impacted by the storm. We have made a donation to the Red Cross in your honor, and we offer our encouragement for the long road ahead.

Insurance Update: Florida's Office of Insurance Regulation has issued an emergency regulation prohibiting insurance companies from canceling insurance policies for persons and businesses located in the 12 counties sustaining damage from the storm. These counties are: Brevard, Charlotte, Desoto, Hardee, Lake, Lee, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Sarasota, Seminole and Volusia. If you are located in one of these counties, your insurance is protected until October 15th. This includes homeowners insurance, auto insurance, and workers' compensation insurance. Starting August 1st, these policies cannot be cancelled until October 15th.

If you have your workers' compensation insurance through FUBA Workers' Comp, and your policy was scheduled to cancel in the month of September, we have extended that cancellation date until October 15th. Your policy is now effective until that date, and you will be expected to pay the appropriate premium for this time period. You may voluntarily request the cancellation of your policy. To do so, please fax a written request to our Policy Services Department at 850-201-6801.

Public Adjusters: The Florida Department of Financial Services would like to educate people affected by the storm about Public Adjusters. These are people who work for you, the insured, by trying to seek a claim settlement from your insurance company. They are paid by taking a percentage of the claim payment you receive from your insurance company. **If you contract with a Public Adjuster, you are authorizing the insurance company's claim check to be made payable to both you (or your mortgagee) and the Public Adjuster.** Please be aware of the following:

- You may be approached by an Insurance Adjuster who is not licensed to adjust insurance claims in Florida.
- If you are approached by any Adjuster, ask them to show you proof they are licensed in Florida. You can verify their license by calling 1-800-22-STORM.
- To report unlicensed Insurance Adjusters, or for other insurance-related assistance, call 1-800-22-STORM.

There are 3 types of adjusters in Florida who are able to assess your damage and work with your insurance company to help settle your claim. They are:

- Company Adjusters – These Adjusters are employees of your insurance company, and they will not charge a fee for their services.
- Independent Adjusters – These Adjusters are hired by your insurance company, and they also will not charge a fee for their services.
- Public Adjusters – These Adjusters do not work for the insurance company, and they take a percentage of your settlement. By law, this percentage cannot exceed 10% of your claim payment on a residential or commercial loss. You are encouraged to negotiate a percentage less than the 10%

maximum. Public adjusters cannot require you to pay them a retainer or deposit before your claim is settled. Also, you may cancel your contract with a Public Adjuster within 14 days of signing it.

Please note: Unlicensed Public Adjusters have not demonstrated their competency to adjust your claim nor have they posted the required surety bond. They have not had the background check that is required for licensure in Florida. It is a felony to present yourself as a Public Adjuster without being licensed.

Unlicensed Contractors: Florida has strict licensure requirements for certain contractors. If your home or business was damaged by the storm, and you are hiring a contractor for repairs, please be aware that a contractor's license is required for any structural additions, roofing, air conditioning, plumbing, electric/alarm work, or any job requiring a building permit. You should only hire licensed Florida contractors, and you can verify a contractor's state license by calling 850-487-1395. If you contract with an unlicensed contractor, you will not be able to receive compensation from the Florida Homeowners' Construction Recovery Fund if any financial losses occur. To report unlicensed contractors, call the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation at 850-488-6603.

If you are a contractor working without a license, please be aware that state officials are currently canvassing counties affected by the storm and will be verifying licenses and workers' compensation insurance. Those without licensure and proper insurance will be stopped from working and assessed the appropriate penalties.

Attention State-Licensed Contractors: Florida Governor Jeb Bush has issued an Executive Order allowing certain state-licensed contractors to perform roofing work in some counties affected by the hurricane. Starting August 25th, certified or registered

- General contractors,
- Building contractors, and
- Residential contractors

will be allowed to perform roofing work for the repair and installation of roofs made of wood shakes or

asphalt or fiberglass shingles. The Order applies to following counties:

- Charlotte
- Lee
- DeSoto
- Hardee
- Polk
- Osceola
- Orange
- Seminole
- Volusia

If you perform roofing work under this temporary Order, you must pay the appropriate workers' compensation premiums for all roofing jobs you perform. You should keep separate payroll records for any and all payroll associated with roofing work. If you have any questions, please call your insurance company.

License Renewal Extended: Both certified construction contractors and electrical contractors are currently in a renewal cycle for their licenses. The current deadline to renew these licenses is August 31, 2004. However, due to Hurricane Charley, the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation has extended this deadline until November 1, 2004. Affected contractors now have until midnight on November 1, 2004, to renew their license without paying a penalty. Consumers verifying licensure for these contractors should note that the August 31, 2004 license expiration is now valid through midnight on November 1, 2004.