

## Public Insurance Adjusters - What Do They Do and Do You Need One?

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*DALLAS, July 11, 2012 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/* -- Property and business owners dealing with the aftermath of baseball-sized hail, windstorms and tornadoes in Dallas, Grand Prairie, Fort Worth, Arlington, Irving and surrounding areas of Texas are in the process of dealing with insurance claims. In some cases, policyholders may choose to work with a public adjuster.

**Do you need a public adjuster?** Are you dealing with a hail/wind storm insurance claim seeking an advocate who represents your interests, NOT the insurance company? Do you have no time, expertise or desire to deal with the burden of an insurance claim? Are you concerned your insurance claim is being underpaid, delayed or denied? If your answer is "yes" to any of the above questions then you may want to consider interviewing a public adjuster as soon as possible.

**What does a public adjuster do for a property owner?** A public adjuster is an advocate who exclusively represents the interests of the policyholder (not the insurance company) in appraising and negotiating an insurance claim. Public Adjusters can legally represent the rights of an insured during an insurance claim process. Their main responsibilities include visiting the site of the loss to analyze the damages, making sure the loss is documented, prepare damage estimates, review your insurance policy for coverage, determine current replacement costs,

determine values for settling covered damages, evaluate business interruption losses, determine building code upgrades, interpret policy, negotiate a settlement with the insurance company of behalf of the insured, handle paperwork required by the insurance company and re-open a claim and negotiate for higher settlement if a discrepancy is found after a claim has been settled.

Public adjusters typically contract to assist with complex or high-value claims, but less often with minor losses. If you don't have time, expertise or desire to deal with the burden of an insurance claim, using a public adjuster can be a valuable service.

The **5 main reasons** why property owners hire public adjusters is because they typically:

1. Work on a No Recovery, No Fee basis.
2. Can help eliminate the burden, time and stress of you having to deal with your insurance company by taking care of all the paperwork, documentation, and negotiations.
3. Negotiate settlements more efficiently than the average policyholder or contractor.\*
4. Exclusively & legally represent YOUR INTERESTS...NOT the insurance company.

5. Can re-open claims and negotiate for higher settlement if a discrepancy is found after a claim has been settled.

**How much should a public adjuster charge?** Texas state laws limit the amount a public adjuster may charge to 10 percent of the claim. Regardless of price, you want to hire a reputable and experienced public adjuster. "Money matters but end results matter more," says Scott Friedson CEO of Insurance Claim Recovery Support.

"The great thing about public adjusters is that policyholders get an advocate who can legally and independently level the playing field with an insurance company with typically no risk to the policyholder as we work on a no recovery, no fee basis."

Insured losses from the massive hailstorm that struck the Dallas area on June 13th could reach as much as \$2 billion, making it one of the most costly storms of its type in U.S. history.

Tips to remember before hiring a public adjuster...

- Make sure the person is licensed by the Texas Department of Insurance. You can call the Department of Insurance at 800-578-4677 to verify a license.

- Find out where the licensed public adjuster resides permanently. After disasters, sometimes out-of-state individuals will travel to another state to handle claims.
- Find out how long the individual has been a public adjuster.
- Is the firm a member of the National and Texas Association of Public Insurance Adjusters? Ask for local recommendations for others they have assisted in Texas, and contact the individuals for their opinion of the work.
- Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) Commissioner's Bulletin #B-0017-12 urges consumers to report contractors & roofing companies not licensed by TDI for advertising or performing acts that require them to hold a public insurance adjuster license to the TDI Fraud Unit 1-800-252-3439.

For more information, contact Scott Friedson 214-380-9127 or visit the ICRS website. ICRS is dedicated to preserving the rights and interests of Texas policyholders and is committed to promoting a fair and ethical business environment in Texas. Consumer protection is our mission.

**About the author:** Scott Friedson has more than 15 years of experience as an apartment owner, commercial real estate professional and the founder of Insurance Claim Recovery Support LLC (ICRS). He is a Texas licensed real estate broker #501008 and public insurance adjuster #1632488.

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