



Andrew M. Cuomo - Governor

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## Governor Cuomo Announces Homeowners Will Not Have to Pay Hurricane Deductibles

*Department of Financial Services Working Closely with Insurers to Speed Response to Homeowners Who Experienced Losses*

*New Yorkers Can Call DFS Disaster Hotline for Help*

Albany, NY (October 31, 2012)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that New York homeowners will not have to pay potentially large hurricane deductibles on insurance claims stemming from damage caused by Monday's storm.

The New York State Department of Financial Services has informed the insurance industry that hurricane deductibles should not be triggered for this storm. This will prevent coastal homeowners from having to pay deductibles in their insurance policies.

"Homeowners should not have to pay hurricane deductibles for damage caused by the storm and insurers should understand the Department of Financial Services will be monitoring how claims are handled," Governor Cuomo said.

Many homeowners' insurance policies for homes located in downstate areas contain hurricane deductibles based on a percentage of a property's insured value. These deductibles typically range from one percent of a home's insured value to five percent. So for example, with a five percent deductible on a home insured for \$300,000, the homeowner would have to pay for the first \$15,000 of damage.

Benjamin M. Lawsky, Superintendent of Financial Services, said, "We have informed the insurance industry that hurricane deductibles are not triggered because Sandy did not have sustained hurricane-force winds when it made land in New York. We will be working with insurers to help them respond as quickly as possible to homeowners who need to file claims. And we will be sending our mobile command center to hard hit areas to help consumers with insurance questions and problems."

DFS urges homeowners who experienced property losses to file insurance claims with their insurers promptly and as soon as possible after losses occur. It is important to provide policy numbers and all information relevant to the loss. To best document losses, homeowners should to take photos or videos showing the extent of the losses before cleaning up damage.

Homeowners should make only necessary repairs to prevent further damage to property, like covering broken windows. Permanent repairs should not be made until after insurers have inspected losses. Damaged personal property should be kept until after an insurance settlement has been reached.

In addition, homeowners should cooperate fully with their insurer and keep a diary of all conversations with the insurance agent, including the agent's name, as well as the times and dates of all calls or visits.

Homeowners are also reminded that flood damage is only covered by flood insurance, which is a federal program administered by FEMA. Homeowners who have flood insurance and have flood damage should make claims through that insurance.

DFS will be sending its mobile command center to hard hit areas to help consumers with insurance questions and problems.

DFS has activated a Disaster Hotline to answer consumer questions and help with problems. The Disaster Hotline number is 800-339-1759. It is staffed Monday – Friday from 8 AM – 8 PM and Saturday - Sunday from 9 AM – 4 PM.

Homeowners unable to resolve disputes with insurers can file complaints at <http://www.dfs.ny.gov/consumer/fileacomplaint.htm>.

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