

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEMA-MISSISSIPPI DISASTER NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UP TO \$20K AVAILABLE TO
FLOOD-STRICKEN MISSISSIPPIANS
TO PREVENT FUTURE FLOOD DAMAGE**

JACKSON, Miss. National flood insurance policyholders who sustained substantial damage to their home or business during the April 6th through 14th severe weather could qualify for additional funds to help prevent flooding from happening again.

Property owners who rebuild in a special flood hazard area are required to comply with the floodplain ordinance when they rebuild. When a structure located within a flood zone is substantially damaged by flooding and the resident has flood insurance, he or she may be eligible to file an Increased Cost of Compliance (ICC) claim through the National Flood Insurance Program. That claim is processed separately from regular flood insurance policy damage claims.

Substantial damage occurs when a locality determines that a structure is damaged to the point that repairs will cost 50 percent or more of the building's pre-flood market value.

An ICC claim can allot up to \$20,000 to help offset the increased costs associated with bringing a home or business into compliance with local community floodplain ordinances.

Increased ICC monies can be used in one of the four following categories:

- Elevating a home or business to or above the flood elevation level adopted by the local community.
- Relocating a home or business out of harm's way.
- Demolishing and removing flood-damaged structures.
- Flood-proofing a non-residential building. This involves making a building watertight through a combination of adjustments or additions of features to the building that reduces the potential for flood damage.

Leon Shaifer, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency's official in charge of disaster recovery cautioned, "You can file an ICC claim only if your community determines that your home or business has been substantially damaged or repetitively damaged by a flood. This determination is made when you apply for a building permit from local officials to begin repairing your structure."

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Carlos Mitchell, the federal official in charge of disaster recovery, added, "Once the determination of substantial damage has been made, policyholders should contact the insurance company or agent who wrote the flood policy. The insurer will assign a claims representative who will help with processing the claim."

The federally backed NFIP is available to homeowners, renters and business owners in communities that adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood losses by regulating new construction in high-risk areas. Currently, there are more than 41,761 flood insurance policies in approximately 274 participating communities in Mississippi, representing nearly \$4.3 billion worth of coverage. The NFIP is self-supporting. Claims and operating expenses are paid from policyholder premiums, not taxpayer dollars.

For additional information on ICC claims, call either your insurance company or agent, or call the NFIP toll-free number at **1-800-427-9662**. The hearing or speech impaired may call **TTY 1-800-427-5593**.

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