

Four Steps to Finding Home Insurance in California

NBC Los Angeles

If you've been dropped by your home insurance company, there are steps you can take to stay protected

Not having insurance for your home can be nerve-wracking, and more and more, there are homeowners put in positions where their insurance companies drop them, citing high fire risk and other circumstances.

If you're in a brush-heavy or forested area that's been recently hit by wildfire, it may be hard to find a company who wants to insure you, and finding a replacement policy might cost more and offer less protection than your previous policy, according to the non-profit group United Policyholders, which helps homeowners who have been dropped by their insurers.

Non-renewals of home insurance policies initiated by insurers in 2021 are up almost 30% from the previous year, according to data from the California Department of Insurance.

However, you do have options so you are not stuck without insurance. Here are four steps to help:

Take Action Immediately

In California, you will get a minimum 75 days before your policy expires after your insurance cancels on you.

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Shop Around

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Source: <https://uphelp.org/four-steps-to-finding-home-insurance-in-california/> Date: May 3, 2024

If you get dropped by one insurance company, another one might insure you. Experts say to call big names and independent, smaller companies, too.

Get Help

If you're not having any luck with your search, get help from a state licensed insurance agent or broker.

Check out California Fair Plan

Your final fallback may be the California Fair Plan. It's a pool of insurers offering policies to provide basic fire coverage when there is no other option.

The Fair Plan website has a "find a broker" page where you can look up an agent or broker who can help with these specific types of policies.

They must be licensed in California and cannot charge you a fee to assist you with a Fair Plan policy. Also, the policy premium is the same with or without a broker or agent, according to the website.

The executive director of United Policyholders says this is often basic coverage, which means you may need more coverage for things like downed trees, theft, burst pipes or liability.

The group will hold a seminar on Friday, June 9 to help homeowners who have questions. A representative of the Fair Plan will be available to discuss new options with their policies, according to United Policyholders.