

Property owners face important deadlines on second anniversary of wildfire

El Paso County

El Paso County, CO, April 29, 2015 - With the two year anniversary of the Black Forest Fire approaching El Paso County reminds property owners to keep in mind important insurance deadlines.

“Residents impacted by the Black Forest Fire need to meet certain deadlines in order to preserve their rights under the terms of their policies,” said Commissioner Darryl Glenn who represents the Black Forest area. “Fire victims should pay attention to the information provided by the consumer protection organization United Policy Holders so that they do not miss any of these important deadlines.”

United Policy Holders, a non-profit consumer organization which provided information and assistance offers assistance through a number of recovery meetings following the Black Forest fire reminds residents that the second anniversary of the fire will be June, 11, 2015.

Typically policy holders can expect the following to take place on the two-year anniversary of the fire:

- * The expiration of your additional living expense/loss of use benefits
- * A firm deadline for suing your agent, broker or insurance company
- * A deadline for collecting full replacement value on contents or dwelling

If you have not reached an acceptable insurance settlement, communicate with your insurer ASAP. Many insurers will grant extensions of deadlines for good cause but you must ask for them. United Policy Holders offers sample letters that you can customize and send to your insurance company. Be sure to ask for extensions well in advance of the deadline. If your insurer says no, contact The Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA). The contact email for the Insurance Division of DORA is dora_ins_website@state.co.us The toll free phone number for DORA is 800-886-7675.

Policy holders should make every attempt to get written confirmation prior to the two-year anniversary stating that:

- * Your insurance claim will remain open and payable past the two-year anniversary
- * Your insurer will continue to honor its obligation to pay all benefits owed, including replacement values past the two-year anniversary

* Your insurer agrees that it will NOT enforce any “suit against us” provision that may arise at the two-year anniversary

Courts enforce law suit deadlines strictly, so if you feel your insurer has acted unreasonably, get a review of your situation from a qualified Colorado “bad faith attorney” well before the anniversary date.

Other things to do before the Second Anniversary:

- * Communicate with your insurer in writing, and where needed seek deadline extensions
- * Customize and send a letter seeking an extension for good cause
- * Organize and turn in receipts for reimbursement of additional living expense (ALE) benefits
- * Correct any errors in payments or allocations
- * Read your policy “Declarations” page and double check the math: Were limits accurately adjusted for extended coverage endorsements and inflation protection?

Homeowners who suffered partial loss/damage should:

- * Check your home and personal property carefully for additional, secondary, or hidden damages and file the necessary documentation with your insurer to claim benefits for restoration or replacement well ahead of any deadlines. You will need time to secure estimates and recover any outstanding depreciation
- * Look over delicate items that were cleaned to see if they are exhibiting yellowing or deterioration from the residues or cleaning process itself. This is known as secondary damage and should be covered under most policies.
- * Check exterior finishes for cracking and peeling caused by heat exposure from the fire or power washing to remediate the smoke and soot staining

You can find more information from United Policy Holders at: <http://www.uphelp.org>