



COLORADO
Department of
Regulatory Agencies
Division of Insurance

Marshall Wildfire 6 Month Survey Report

To support the Roadmap to Recovery™ program services that United Policyholders is providing to households impacted by the December 30th, 2021 Marshall WildFire and Straight Line Winds Event, we conducted a survey six months into the recovery process. This report distills the responses of all households that completed the survey and reported damaged or destroyed property.

This survey was conducted in partnership with the Colorado Division of Insurance using all available channels to reach Marshall-impacted households. This included direct outreach to identifiable individuals, partners that assisted in distributing the survey link, and social and traditional media. Special thanks to Colorado VOAD, Marshall ROC, the Community Foundation Boulder County and other local leaders and organizations with whom UP is coordinating to provide long term recovery services in the region.

The goal of the survey was to identify individual and common insurance and recovery problems and progress and assess the claims handling performance of insurers in the region. Aggregated survey data can be viewed at www.uphelp.org/surveyresults. UP maintains the confidentiality of survey participants' personal and identifying information.

Significant findings: A substantial number of households are underinsured and do not have adequate dwelling insurance limits to cover the actual cost of replacing their destroyed assets. This is true despite the fact that the majority of surveyed households reported having "extended replacement cost coverage" which theoretically should have protected them from being underinsured. This finding is supported by the [Marshall Fire Claims Data Analysis](#) conducted by the Colorado Division of Insurance.

The survey results also show that 46% survey respondents have a dollar limit on Additional (Temporary) Living Expense benefits, despite the fact that Colorado law does not permit such limits, according to the Colorado Division of Insurance.

Another significant finding is that in the majority of cases, insurers are strictly enforcing their requirement that total loss victims provide detailed, itemized personal property inventories in order to collect policy benefits. In some cases, due to pressure from the Colorado Division of Insurance and United Policyholders, some insurers are relaxing that requirement for some claimants.

NOTE: Pursuant to a new CO law that applies to losses arising *after* January, 2022, insurers must offer policyholders the option of accepting 65% of their policy limits for personal property/contents in return for not having to prepare and submit an itemized inventory. Only 14% of survey respondents were offered that option.

Survey Sample Size and Information:

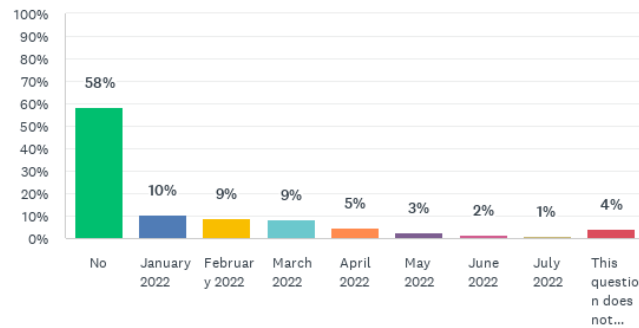
This survey was open from May 18th, 2022 to August 1st, 2022. This survey captures data approximately 6 months after the December 30th, 2021 Marshall Fire in Boulder County, Colorado. During data cleaning, in instances when a survey respondent took the survey multiple times, analysis only uses the most recent response. Sample Size: 734 households representing a total of 2,038 individual fire survivors.

This report tabulates the results of the insured sample size: 98% of survey respondents filed an insurance claim following the Marshall Fire.

Insurance Claim Progress:

- 58% of survey respondents have not yet settled the dwelling portion of their claim.

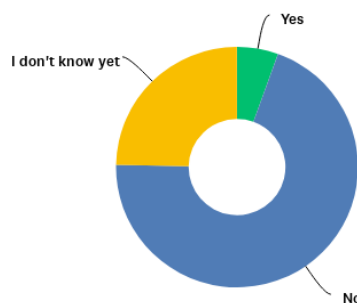
Q11 Has your insurance company paid you the full amount of your available "dwelling" benefits? If so, when?



Underinsurance (Policy limits that are inadequate to cover actual losses):

- 68% of total loss survey respondents reported they **do not** have enough insurance to cover the cost of replacing or rebuilding their home.
- 6% of total loss survey respondents reported they have enough insurance to cover the cost of replacing or rebuilding their home.
- 26% of total loss survey respondents reported they **do not know** yet if they are underinsured.

Q12 Do you have enough insurance to cover the cost of repairing, replacing or rebuilding your home? (to meet current building codes)

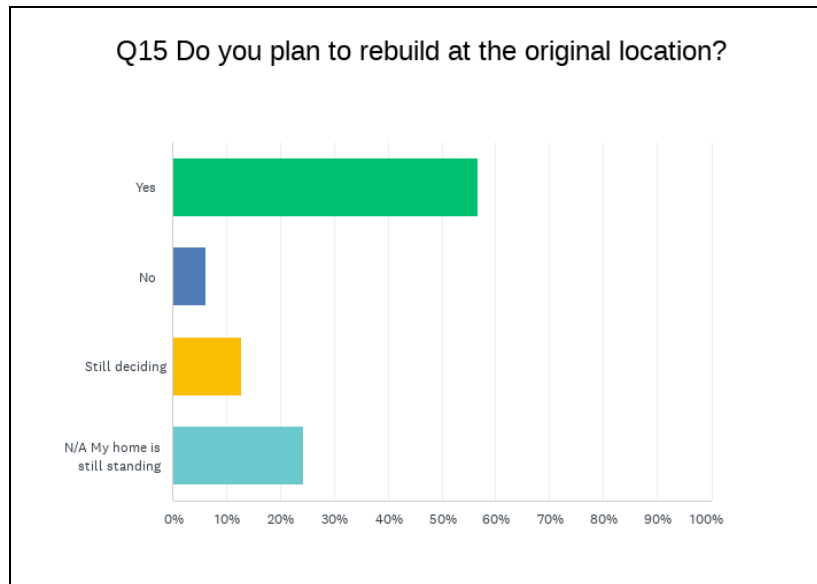


Insurance Coverage:

- 68% of survey respondents reported they have “Extended Replacement Cost” coverage equal to at least 20% of their dwelling limit
- 57% of survey respondents with with home insurance reported they have "Law and Ordinance" coverage equal to 10% of their dwelling limit
- 12% of survey respondents reported they have a “Guaranteed Replacement Cost” Policy
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Rebuilding vs. Buying a Replacement Home:

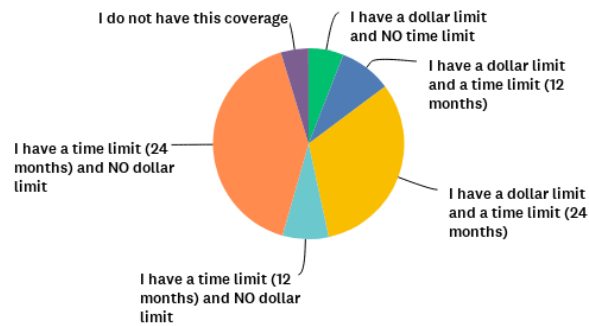
- 76% of total loss survey respondents plan to rebuild.
- 8% of total loss survey respondents do not plan to rebuild.
- 17% of total loss survey respondents are undecided.



Loss of Use / Additional Living Expense Coverage:

- 46% of survey respondents reported their Loss of Use / Additional Living Expense coverage has a dollar limit.

Q17 Tell us about your "Additional Living Expenses" coverage limits (check all that apply)



Personal Property Claims:

- 14% of survey respondents reported receiving 100% of their personal property limits without having to complete an itemized home inventory.
 - Respondents reported having the following insurance companies: Allstate (37), Safeco (12), AAA/CSAA (7), Liberty Mutual (6), State Farm (5), Travelers (4), Branch (2), Chubb (2), AmFam (1), Amica (1), Nationwide (1), USAA (1)
 - Allstate has provided a 100% waiver of the contents inventory requirement to 57% of total loss survey respondents insured with that company.
- 53% of survey respondents reported their insurer is requiring them to list and describe every single damaged or destroyed item
- 23% of survey respondents reported their insurer is imposing a deadline for submitting your inventory
- 39% of survey respondents reported their insurance company did NOT explain “depreciation” and what they need to do to collect full replacement value on depreciated items.

Claim Issues:

- 53% of survey respondents reported receiving a “lowball” settlement offer.

- 37% of survey respondents reported experiencing delays in communication such as answering questions, phone calls or emails.
- 37% of survey respondents reported having 3 or more adjusters assigned to their claim.
- 26% of survey respondents reported delays of payments.
- 23% of survey respondents reported they have **not** had any problems with their insurance claim or with insurance company representatives.
- 35% of survey respondents who report having a problem with their insurance claim have filed a complaint with the Colorado Department of Insurance.

Post-Disaster Stress:

When asked “what are your biggest sources of post-fire stress”, insured fire survivors responded:

- 72% - insurance claim process
- 53% - overwhelmed by too many decisions
- 50% - rebuilding stress

At the end of the survey, we ask survivors: is anything else you would like to share? Here are quotes from survivors in their own words:

“We greatly appreciate the insurance commission being involved and pressuring the insurance companies to comply. Keep the pressure on! We need ALE extended and better systems for claim process” - C.N., Marshall Fire Survivor

“United Policyholders has been our primary and most valuable resource in getting through this. Your recent webinar on buying a new home was another very helpful resource. We are very grateful.”
- T.H., Marshall Fire Survivor

“This has been the most traumatic event of our lives” - V.S., Marshall Fire Survivor

“The sense of community that has developed since the fire has been amazing! We are thankful for the ‘no hassle’ insurance company” - L.K., Marshall Fire Survivor

“We have followed all of the guidance and the recommended processes and continue to be in a constant battle with our insurance provider - We have been professional and patient but are struggling to continue to jump through new hoops our insurance lays in our path. We just want to come home.” - M.K., Marshall Fire Survivor

“Thank you for being there when I was feeling most vulnerable and helpless. The advice I received gave me the confidence and information I needed to communicate better with my insurance company.” - R.T., Marshall Fire Survivor

“Please keep up the great work -- what you do is invaluable for those who are new and overwhelmed by the insurance process!” - K.R., Marshall Fire Survivor

“Based on hearing from others impacted, I was fortunate to have great coverage and a good experience with insurer and restoration companies. I am very sad that has not been the norm and I'm in the minority. I've shared my policy details with many friends and family who were both impacted and not impacted in the hopes that they check their coverage and make sure they have ample insurance should they be impacted by something like this.” -L.W., Marshall Fire Survivor

“We've had an incredibly difficult time getting to our policy limits despite a total loss. You would think a total loss means you automatically get the max payout! And even then we know we were underinsured. Ridiculous.” - M., Marshall Fire Survivor

“The insurance industry needs an overhaul. It doesn't exist to support homeowners, but rather the shareholders of the company. This is painfully obvious.” - C.D., Marshall Fire Survivor

“It would be VERY helpful if insurance would pay out Personal Property portion in full without needing to itemize. Itemization is stressful and we could choose to use these funds anyway we choose. Which means we could use it on the new build.” - C.B., Marshall Fire Survivor

“Thank you for your help. I would not be where I am today without the yellow book and many informative webinars.” T.O., Marshall Fire Survivor

“UP and DOI talks have been invaluable. I could not have survived this emotionally or at all without UP. I would like to volunteer for future UP events and help future wildfire survivors.”

- B.H., Marshall Fire Survivor

“Thanks so much to everyone in your organization--this all would have been much worse without the resources you so generously provide.” - M.S., Marshall Fire Survivor

“United policyholders was a game changer for my family. I appreciate everything you guys do!”

- S., Marshall Fire Survivor

About Roadmap to Recovery Surveys:

United Policyholders routinely conducts post-disaster surveys to collect data from impacted households on the long term recovery process, insurance claims, repairs and rebuilding. Our organization uses the collected data to identify problems, progress, community and individual needs. The survey results inform the Roadmap to Recovery™ workshop, webinar and website guidance and services we provide in disaster-impacted communities. For more information on United Policyholders' work with Marshall Fire survivors, visit: www.uphelp.org/marshallfire. 97% of survey respondents found United Policyholders services helpful. Thank you to all the local community organizations that helped with survey outreach. For questions or comments, please email emily.rogan@uphelp.org.