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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **INSURANCE COMMISSIONER URGES HOMEOWNERS TO BE PREPARED FOR POSSIBLE STORM DAMAGE**

**Baltimore, MD (August 25, 2011)**... The Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) has the following suggestions for Maryland residents concerning their property insurance as Hurricane Irene approaches our area.

Read your policy to determine what is covered and what is excluded. Not all policies are alike. The following expenses may or may not be covered or may have limits on the extent of their coverage:

- water and windstorm damage
- debris or tree removal
- sewer and drain back-up
- sump pump failure
- additional living expenses if disaster forces you from your home

Marylanders should locate and keep available the following information:

- Insurance company name and contact information
- Policy number(s)
- Insurance agent's name and telephone number
- A copy of the actual policy(ies)

Prepare an inventory of your property. You can do this several ways, such as by taking photographs or a video of your property, or using various tools offered by your insurance company or on-line services. Once your inventory is complete, store this information at an alternate site away from your home or on-line, so that the inventory can be accessed in the event that your home is damaged or inaccessible. Also, it is important to retain documents that provide proof of ownership, such as receipts and owners manuals. Visit the MIA's website at [www.mdinsurance.state.md.us](http://www.mdinsurance.state.md.us) for more information on taking a home inventory.

Check your policy to see if a special deductible applies for losses due to windstorms, hailstorms or hurricanes. Many companies have a different deductible if the cause of the damage is wind or hail. These deductibles are often shown as either a dollar amount or a percentage of the home's insured value (not as a percentage of the loss itself). By law, if the policy requires that a deductible in the case of a hurricane or other storm be expressed as a percentage, it cannot exceed five percent (5%) of the coverage limit, unless the Commissioner has granted written approval to the insurance company. However, if you choose, you can purchase a policy with a deductible in the case of a hurricane or other storm in an amount greater than five percent (5%). The insurance company is required to provide the policyholder with an annual statement explaining the manner in which the deductible is applied.

Additional information about homeowners insurance is available on the MIA's website, [www.mdinsurance.state.md.us](http://www.mdinsurance.state.md.us). For more information about how to prepare for an emergency, visit [www.mema.state.md.us](http://www.mema.state.md.us).

The MIA also offers "An Insurance Preparedness Guide for Natural Disasters." This guide includes emergency numbers for local, state and federal agencies that offer assistance during and after a disaster. Call the MIA at 1-800-492-6116 to request a copy or view this brochure on-line at [www.mdinsurance.state.md.us](http://www.mdinsurance.state.md.us).

*The Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA), founded as the Maryland Insurance Division in 1872, is an independent State agency located in downtown Baltimore. This agency regulates Maryland's \$26 billion insurance industry and makes certain that insurance companies, health plans and producers (agents and brokers) comply with Maryland insurance law. The MIA also licenses over 110,000 producers and approximately 1,500 insurance companies, regulates insurance rates, monitors insurer solvency, investigates consumer complaints and travels across the State providing consumers with educational materials on insurance. These materials may also be found at [www.mdinsurance.state.md.us](http://www.mdinsurance.state.md.us).*