



Hurricane Sandy brings many businesses to a standstill

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Millions of people and business owners are left in the dark after the worst storm hit the Northeast in 78 years. Although difficult as it may be to prepare for natural disasters as a business or property owner, there are certain precautions that you can take to insure that your property or business insurance coverages are going to best protect you from the very costly repairs or unforeseen damages to your business and or personal possessions.

As a starting point you should find a knowledgeable insurance professional to guide you on purchasing the best coverage to suit your needs and compare features included in your policies.

Appraising your property and contents can have a drastic impact on what you are protecting and how much reimbursement you will be entitled to when the Insurance adjuster assesses damage. Having the right insurance coverage prior to these events can really make the difference and get your business back up and running quickly and without interruption. There are important coverage options necessary to have on your insurance policy if you are a business owner, landlord or tenant.

Know and understand your business interruption insurance policy limitations. Business interruption insurance is coverage to protect a company's earnings and potential earnings when it cannot operate normally because of "interruptions" caused by certain physical losses or damages to the company's real or personal property. Like all insurance policies, individual business interruption insurance policies can have strict limitations and provisions hidden in the fine print. It is important to read the policy thoroughly so that you fully understand your coverage. For example, post 9-11, many insurance companies now exclude losses caused by acts of terrorism. Some may also exclude "acts of God," including natural disasters.

Whether you own or rent commercial space, you should always consider your options and responsibilities regarding outside and structural property as well as contents of the space. For example, if you own commercial space and the business related to the space such as a clothing business you want to protect your merchandise in addition to the building structure, you also want to be reimbursed for any lost business due to such a loss. Keep inventory and always adjust your coverage as your business grows or values fluctuate.

Some insurance policies will not offer coverage when you make changes to the architecture of buildings. You should make sure that the property insurance does not turn void when you change the architecture or structural basis of your building. If restoration is needed due to unforeseen events, age or business expansion, to be properly covered you will need to make sure that your property insurance is updated and will remain active as these renovations are being made.

Check for the limitations

When you pay for property insurance, you should be completely aware of the type of coverage provided. It is always better to opt for insurance coverage depending on the type of business you own. If your commercial space is located in an area that is prone to natural calamities like wind,

hurricanes or flooding you should make sure that coverage is not limited to other issues that can occur alone such as fire, thefts or vandalism. You should read the terms and conditions fully before signing your applications to bind coverage. This is something that you must do in order to avoid gaps in coverage that apply to your unique situation. If you feel that the terms stipulated by your policy do not meet your needs, speak with your insurance broker and have your broker make provisions for such changes and ask them for a thorough review of your coverage. Having the proper coverage will substantially lower your costs of out of pocket expenses after a tragic event, as well as make your restoration process easier and less stressful knowing that you were protected correctly.

Keeping all these factors in mind will enable you to opt for the best property and liability protection available for your personal, commercial and business needs.

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