



## News Release

***For Immediate Release***

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## Insurance fraud is not a victimless crime

**Raleigh, NC – August 23, 2017 – Insurance fraud is not a victimless crime!** In fact, it is an expensive and often a dangerous crime that results in increased insurance costs for every household. While the exact amount of fraud is difficult to determine, the Insurance Information Institute estimates that 10% of the insurance industries' losses and adjustment expenses can be attributed to fraud.

Insurance fraud can include a wide range of crimes – from intentionally damaging property or embellishing losses, to providing false information when applying for insurance, or agents accepting payment but not issuing a policy.

Russ Dubisky, a spokesman for the Insurance Federation of North Carolina (IFNC) explained, “Staged auto accidents or simply inflating damages and the severity of injuries after an accident are common examples of individuals trying to defraud auto insurance companies.” “Arson for profit is a dangerous and regular form of fraud against homeowners insurers.”

Insurance fraud is a problem that affects all areas of the state. According to the N.C. Department of Insurance (DOI), there were more than 4,500 reported cases statewide. In 2016, a county-by-county report released by the N.C. DOI, shows that Mecklenburg, Wake, Cumberland, and Guilford Counties each had more than 200 cases of reported fraud, but every single county in the state had at least one reported case.

While insurance fraud continues to be an expensive crime in the state, the Department of Insurance has a Criminal Investigations Division dedicated to working with other law enforcement agencies and the private insurance industry's Special Investigation Units (SIU) to combat the effects of fraud. In 2016, these efforts led to the recovery of more than \$4.8 million in fines and restitution.

With more work to be done, fraud investigators and law enforcement agencies encourage citizens to be part of the solution by reporting suspected or known fraud to an anonymous tip line at 919-807-6840. All reports remain confidential.

*For more information from the Insurance Federation of North Carolina, or to schedule an interview, call (919)539-1375.*

*The Insurance Federation of North Carolina (IFNC) is a trade association established in 2004 by the leading property and casualty insurance companies doing business in North Carolina. IFNC serves as the voice for the industry on legislative and regulatory matters and promotes consumer awareness on issues of importance to the property and casualty insurance industry.*

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## Tropical cyclone could impact North Carolina

**Raleigh, N.C. – August 28, 2017** – A disturbance off the coast of Georgia is moving over warm waters and the National Hurricane Center is forecasting its development into a tropical storm over the next 12 to 24 hours.

This potential cyclone has prompted the issuance of a Tropical Storm Warning for parts of eastern North Carolina, including most of the Outer Banks.

Should the storm develop into Tropical Storm Irma, North Carolinians may feel the impacts of strong wind gusts and heavy rains beginning Tuesday. However, the strongest part of the storm is expected to remain offshore.

“While the state has not issued any evacuation orders, coastal residents are encouraged to take precautions to help ensure their safety,” said Russ Dubisky, a spokesman for the Insurance Federation of North Carolina (IFNC). “Planning ahead is crucial to your safety, and it’s a good routine for people to review their insurance policies before a storm is imminent.”

IFNC reminds you of these important tips:

### **General safety and loss prevention:**

- Prepare the exterior of your home and yard if strong winds and water are imminent. Nail any loose shingles or boards, and cover windows with plywood or storm shutters. Cut weak limbs and those overhanging a structure and remove yard debris.
- Bring lawn furniture, potted plants, garbage cans, grills and outdoor decorative items into the garage. They could be damaged or act as dangerous projectiles causing serious injury or destruction.

### **Emergency plan:**

- Decide ahead of time where you’ll go if an evacuation order is issued, and have more than one alternative – the home of a friend or family member, a hotel, a shelter. Be sure to listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio and TV stations for evacuation information and instructions.

- Plan what to take with you. Disaster kits should include prescriptions, bottled water, clothing, flashlights, a battery-powered radio, batteries, items needed for pets, insurance policies, your home inventory, passports/drivers licenses/ID cards, birth and marriage certificates, and bank account numbers and other financial information.

#### **Insurance review:**

Talk to your insurance agent or company to update, ask questions, and make sure you have the right coverages in place to protect against losses.

- Flood insurance is not included in a basic homeowners policy. Floods (including storm surge brought on by hurricanes) are the most common natural disaster in the U.S. There is a 30-day waiting period from the day you purchase flood insurance until it goes into effect.
- A home inventory is a great way to ensure you have adequate coverage for your home's contents. A home inventory is a list of all your personal possessions and their estimated value. To help with the process, many insurance companies offer free Home Inventory Software. Several examples can be found at [Knowyourstuff.org](http://Knowyourstuff.org).

#### **If you experience damage from wind or hail, contact your insurance company or agent as soon as possible.**

- Survey the damage and notify your insurance agent or company of any losses.
- If it is safe to do so, make any temporary repairs necessary to protect property from further damage. Keep all receipts for material used, and do not dispose of damaged personal property until an adjuster has had the opportunity to examine it.
- Photographs or video documentation of damaged property may be helpful.
- Find your insurance policy and have your policy number handy when you are ready to make your claim.

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