

Property Program: Storm Damage

By Gordy Van

Recently, the State of Washington received a dire forecast of rain and windstorms. Multiple social events were cancelled, including school homecoming celebrations. As we all buckled up for a rollercoaster weekend, we were relieved that the storm hitting our state was much less than predicted. The City of Manzanita, Oregon was not as fortunate and although no sharks were released, the City sustained significant damage from a tornado that touched down.

With the advent of fall, we are likely to see additional storms and the related damage that ensues. For members insured under the property program, there is coverage for damage to scheduled property resulting from windstorms, subject to the member's deductible. A storm that causes damage to multiple scheduled properties is considered a single occurrence that is subject to a single deductible.

The majority of damage we see following a windstorm is from downed trees. As a general rule, we will cover damage to structures at a scheduled location, including the removal of the debris (fallen tree). If a fallen tree is natural growth and does not cause damage to a structure, the removal of the tree and debris is the member's responsibility. If the fallen tree is a planted landscape tree, we will pay for removal of the damaged tree and its replacement, regardless of whether it causes damage to a building.

Storms can rip roofs apart. Wind driven rain and hail may also damage properties, as may surface water. Flood damage, defined as the rising and overflowing of a body of water onto normally dry land, is a different peril than windstorm. Flood damage carries a separate deductible (either \$250,000 or \$500,000 depending on if the property is in a flood plain) and all members sustaining damage from a flood event can combine their damage to meet the flood deductible.

If a building sustains damage, it is important that prompt action be taken to protect the building from further damage. The extra expenses to protect the property are covered under our property program. We will assign an adjuster to assist the City with the claims process and repair once we receive notification of the damage. It is important we receive reports of storm damage as soon as possible because a storm that impacts multiple members across the state over a 168-hour period may be considered a single occurrence for meeting the underlying \$750,000 deductible WCIA carries. Damage above that deductible is covered by the property insurers, up to policy limits of \$300 Million (subject to certain sublimits).

If you are submitting damages to FEMA, please file a claim with WCIA first (regardless of whether the property is scheduled). We will review the claim for coverage and issue a decision. FEMA will not issue payment until they receive WCIA's claim coverage decision.

We are hopeful we will have a calm fall and winter this year. Remember, spring is just around the corner!