



Newsletter

Our 100 year legacy, strengthened by our core values of honesty, trust, care and commitment always safeguards your interests.

Publication issue 3

Web: dsh.gov.au Email: dsh@dva.gov.au Tel: 1300 552 662

Welcome to publication issue 3

In this issue of Defence Service Homes (DSH) Insurance newsletter we share expert advice on things to consider when renting out your property through our home building insurance policy, top tips on how to avoid risk of underinsurance, key steps to keep in mind when returning home after heavy rainfall and information on veteran health and well-being!

NSW floods took its toll in March

New South Wales and parts of South East Queensland recently experienced its worst flooding in decades, with torrential rain and widespread floods leading to thousands being evacuated and parts of these states being classified as areas of natural disaster, leaving locals entirely stranded. The Insurance Council of Australia declared a catastrophe across 1,095 postcodes in NSW, the ACT and QLD. 'Defence Service Homes Insurance placed disaster response specialists on standby to move into affected communities and assist policyholders with claims as soon as it was safe to do so,' says Leona Hardman, National Manager Defence Service Homes (DSH) Insurance.

DSH Insurance received claims for

flood, storm and rainwater related damage within the first few hours of the event, and staff were able to provide support to policyholders once the floodwaters receded.

'DSH Insurance was quick to respond, with our staff managing over 700 calls and over 300 claims in the very first week,' Leona says.

The NSW floods came on the heels of other extreme weather events across the country in recent years, including unprecedented hail, severe storms and, of course, the Black Summer bushfires. These events have highlighted Australia's underinsurance problem, with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission stating that up to 80% of homeowners are underinsured. While some may underinsure their property on purpose, usually in the belief that 'it'll never happen to me',

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Did you know?

DSH Insurance is administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) but is completely self-funded through the premiums paid by policyholders with no funding received from the Government.

Unlike other insurance entities, DSH Insurance doesn't exist to make a profit, but rather the revenue generated from premiums is invested back. This allows DSH Insurance to provide high quality insurance products and services at a competitive price.

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Are your details up to date?

Have you changed your phone number or got a new email address?

Send us an email at dsh@dva.gov.au or call on 1300 552 662 to get your details updated.

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for many others the shortfall is unintentional. 'Having too little coverage on either home building or contents insurance can be a big problem for families, as in the event of a natural disaster they might not have enough money to pay for costs not covered by their insurance policy,' Leona says.

It is important for DSH Insurance policyholders to read their Product Disclosure Statement and Key Facts Sheet to understand what their home building insurance covers. For more than 100 years, DSH Insurance has provided comprehensive home insurance to Australian Defence Force members and veterans. It provides value for money and peace of mind, by protecting homes against floods, storm damage, fires and more -



offering economical premiums and charging no excess (other than for earthquake and some accidental damage). 'Just as we have stood with our policyholders through the pandemic and the bushfires we will stand with those who have been devastated by these floods,' says Leona.

Anyone who needs assistance or seeking information about our policies can call us on

1300 552 662 or **e:dsh@dva.gov.au**

Did you know?



From our modest beginnings over 100 years ago to our vast national presence today, DSH Insurance has enjoyed continuous growth and enrichment of its service offerings.

Want to know the story behind DSH Insurance?

[Check out our Anniversary book](#)

Is your policy up to date?

Have you made some home improvements? Make sure your home building insurance and any other insurances are up to date to include extra cover.

Email us at dsh@dva.gov.au or call on 1300 552 662

Is your home at risk of underinsurance?

Underinsurance occurs when you have insurance, but it's not quite right or enough cover for your personal circumstances, or you don't have insurance at all. The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) estimates that 23 percent of Australian households do not have building or contents insurance, meaning that approximately 1.8 million residential households are not protected. While some may underinsure their property on

purpose, usually in the belief that 'it'll never happen to me', for many others the shortfall is unintentional. Other factors that lead to underinsurance include failing to take into account increased building costs and not adjusting *Sum Insured* value following major renovations. Sometimes underinsurance results from people choosing a lower *Sum Insured* value to reduce their insurance premium.

More Australians have inadequate protection, with the Australian Securities and Investments

Commission stating that up to 80 percent of homeowners are underinsured. If the total amount you have insured your home for is less than what it would cost to rebuild then you are underinsured. In case your home is damaged or destroyed due to an event, you might not have enough financial capacity to pay for any costs not covered by your home building insurance policy. The large-scale losses experienced after the 2020 bushfires and 2021 QLD & NSW floods serve as a reminder of the importance of insurance in avoiding financial losses.

Further data from Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) shows despite having policies in place four out of five Australian property owners and tenants are underinsured. ADF members and veterans who are renting due to posting and other circumstances should check to ensure they have adequate cover for their contents.

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Here's how to fix it – Top tips

Tip 1: Know what the full replacement cost is of your home and check you have included everything with a high replacement cost such as household fittings, carpet and curtains. Use DSH Insurance's [Building Cost Calculator](#) to estimate out how much it would cost to rebuild your home. The estimate will be a guide only and not a professional valuation.

Tip 2: Read your Product Disclosure Statement and Key Facts Sheet to understand what your home building insurance covers – does it cover removal of debris, temporary accommodation etc. if your home can't be lived in.

Tip 3: Check your insurance renewal document to ensure DSH Insurance has accurate and up to date information about your property.

Tip 4: Tenants should check if they are adequately insured through their contents cover. Use our [contents calculator](#) to determine the right amount of cover you need, offered through our insurance partner QBE.

Let's help you cut through the clutter!

Getting your home and contents insurance sorted can be stressful – but don't worry, we're here to assist. You can email or call for assistance.

Renting out your property? Things to consider

One of the biggest stresses involved with renting a property is to understand the type of cover you need when you are a property owner and the potential claims you may be exposed to.

Property Damage: Choosing the right level of cover for your investment property is a difficult decision and depends on the property you are leasing as well as your priorities as a property owner. Before deciding on a cover, it is advised to make sure that your home

is in good condition and is tenantable. 'By far one of the most common insurance claims made by property owners are



severe weather events including properties damaged due to storms,' as George Pipertzis, Assistant Director Underwriting at DSH Insurance, explains. Second most common insurance claim is that of water damage, that can be equally devastating. The type of damage caused by a burst pipe or flexi hose can severely damage your property, which is why it is important to have regular check by a registered plumber. 'Under sink flexi hoses have a tendency to burst if they are not replaced regularly. This way you are onto a problem before it gets out of control,' says George. The DSH Insurance Home Building policy also provides property owners who are renting their properties to tenants with cover for fixtures and fitting for these severe weather events and offer up to \$10,000 or 10% of the sum insured (limits may apply). Fixtures and fitting include items that are permanently fixed to the home including internal blinds, curtains and carpets.

Loss of Rent: Loss of rent applies if the home is damaged by an event that makes the home unfit to live in by your tenant and at the time of the loss or damage you are leasing out the home (for which DSH Insurance agrees to pay a claim). 'DSH Insurance will pay you for loss of rent for the reasonable

time it takes to repair or rebuild the home, or for up to 12 months from the date of the loss or damage, whichever is less, helping our property owner through the rebuilding phase.' says George.

Are there any other insurance factors to consider as a property owner? It's important to go through your Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) to understand if you are covered for tenant rent default and malicious damage caused by the tenant. Property owners are constantly faced with situations where tenants cause malicious damage to their property or tenants fail to maintain the property, leaving owners to foot the bills. In those unexpected situations, it is advised to get a cover for malicious damage caused by the tenant but do note – general maintenance/living standard issues caused by tenants might not be part of the overall cover.

'DSH Insurance's home building cover does not provide cover for malicious damage by tenants or rent default, however DSH Insurance have organised a product with our partner QBE Insurance * and you can find more information here,' says George. Our team is here to assist and answer your questions about the Property Owner Cover so send us an email at dsh@dva.gov.au

[Click here for more information](#)

Disclaimer: This article is based on general insurance advice that only applies to the DSH Insurance building [Product Disclosure Statement \(PDS\)](#).

Each PDS is different, based on an individual's unique needs, so please refer to your PDS before starting any renovations.

*Subject to QBE's underwriting guidelines

Returning home after heavy rainfall—what to expect

Whether your house is flooded, sustained wind or water damage, the aftermath of a storm can pose serious dangers. Returning to your home after severe weather can be an overwhelming experience with live power lines and open areas of your house putting you at risk.

Insurance and flood damage – what to do when you return to your property:

Safety First

- Primarily, don't do anything that puts anyone at risk. Only return to your property when emergency services give the go ahead. If water has entered the property, don't turn on your electricity until it has been inspected by an electrician.

Evidence of the damage

- Document the damage, particularly if your homeowner's

insurance only covers certain types of damage. Take pictures or videos of damage to the property as evidence for your claim.

- Make a list of each item damaged and include a detailed description, such as brand, model and serial number if possible. You can also keep samples of materials and fabrics to show your DSH Insurance assessor.

- Store damaged or destroyed items somewhere safe.

Clean up

- Follow health and safety advice when clearing up after storms, wear appropriate clothing and have experts inspect things like electricity, sewage and water supplies.

- Where possible, remove all wet items such as floor coverings, rugs,

mats, furniture, bedding, linen and clothing.

- Remember to practice basic hygiene during any clean-up period. Wash hands thoroughly after participating in any flood clean-up activities.

Contact DSH Insurance to lodge a claim on **1300 552 662** (24 hours, 7 days a week) or email us at dsh@dva.gov.au include your name, policy number and brief



Building Cost Calculator

Use our online calculator and check the *Sum Insured* value of your home.

Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

✓ Veteran Health Check

- ✓ Stay Healthy
- ✓ Feel Better
- ✓ Get Connected

To find out more visit
www.dva.gov.au/veteranshealthcheck

The Veteran Health Check aims to identify any physical or mental health concerns you may have after you transition out of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). As long as you have at least one day of continuous full-time service in the permanent or reserve forces you can access the Veteran Health Check.

The Veteran Health Check has been specifically designed to help identify physical or mental health concerns you may have early. The comprehensive health check covers all aspects of health and wellbeing,

including physical and mental health. After that, you can get the best help possible through a referral to another service or immediate treatment.

If you have transitioned on or before 30 June 2019, you can access the *One-off Veteran Health Check*. This type of health check is eligible for a benefit through Medicare, so you do not need to be a DVA Veteran Card holder to access the *One-off Veteran Health Check*. If you transitioned out of the ADF on or from July 1 2019, you

are eligible for the *Annual Veteran Health Check*. This service allows you to build a relationship with your local General Practitioner (GP) as you will have an appointment annually every year for the first five years after you leave the ADF. You can access this service through your DVA Veteran Card and it is at no cost to the veteran.

Keep on top of your health and book in for a 45-minute appointment with a GP – your Veteran Health Check. Just make sure they accept the DVA Veteran Card. [Click here to learn more.](#)

If you have not received a DVA White Card and you think that you are eligible, please call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or visit MyService to apply online.

The Veteran Health Check has been specifically designed to help identify physical or mental health concerns you may have. The comprehensive health check covers all aspects of health and wellbeing, including physical and mental health.