Wisconsin Office of the COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE

Tony Evers, Governor of Wisconsin
Nathan Houdek, Commissioner of Insurance

Date: November 20, 2026
To: Property and Casualty Insurers, Public Adjusters, and Interested Parties
From: Nathan Houdek, Commissioner of Insurance
Subject: Storm Damage Claims Processing Expectations

The Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI) is issuing this bulletin to remind insurers that OCI expects timeliness throughout the claims settlement process. Insurers' timeliness on responding to pertinent communications and processing claims is pivotal for consumers to have return to normalcy in their personal life and maintain faith in the insurance process.

On July 26, 2026, Northeast Wisconsin, specifically Appleton and Menasha, were hit with extreme storms, tornados, and hail resulting in excessive property damage throughout the region. As a result, many residents have been displaced from their homes, and many homes have been deemed unsafe or inaccessible by local officials resulting in either temporary or permanent displacement.

Wis. Admin. Code § Ins 6.11(3)(a) requires that insurers should promptly respond to pertinent communications with respect to claims. Wis Admin. Code § Ins 6.11(4) defines prompt to be within ten consecutive days from receipt of a communication concerning a claim except for just cause shown. Additionally, Wis. Admin. Code § Ins 6.11(3)(a)(2) requires that an insurer be able to initiate and conclude a claims investigation with all reasonable dispatch. Finally, Wis. Admin. Code § Ins 6.11(3)(a) and (b) also requires insurers to adopt and exercise reasonable standards for investigating and adjudicating claims.

In the wake of a catastrophe such as these storms, it is crucial that insurers continue to communicate with consumers "promptly" and complete their claims investigation with "all reasonable dispatch."

It is expected that insurers will devote the resources needed to ensure that this happens in areas affected by the storms. Failure to make provision for adequate claims handling personnel, systems and procedures to effectively service claims or failure adopt reasonable standards for investigation of claims may constitute an unfair method and practice in the business of insurance under Wis. Admin. Code § Ins 6.11(3)(b).

Additionally, 2021 Wisconsin Act 107 made several changes to the process related to municipal raze orders of insured properties. *See* Wis. Stat. § 66.0413(5). Under the Wis. Stat. § 66.0413 (5) (f), municipalities retain the authority to order the owners of the dwelling to make the building safe and sanitary. The raze order process under the Act does not apply if the municipality determines that the dwelling is in imminent danger of structural collapse and the owner has not secured and limited access to the dwelling.

Finally, public adjusters must adhere to the requirements set forth by Chapter 629. In particular, because Governor Tony Evers declared a state of emergency on July 28 for Outagamie, Winnebago, Forest, and Vilas counties (*See* Executive Order #300), *Declaring a State of Emergency in Response to*

Severe Weather), public adjusters may not receive compensation in excess of 10% of an insured's actual recovery under the insurance policy for claims due to the catastrophic disaster pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 629.05 (6).

Any questions concerning this bulletin may be directed to Sarah Smith, Director of Public Affairs, at Sarah.Smith2@wisconsin.gov.