



# Office of Commissioner of Insurance

**Ralph Hudgens**  
Commissioner of Insurance  
Safety Fire Commissioner  
Industrial Loan Commissioner

## NEWS RELEASE

James "Sloppy" Floyd Building  
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Suite  
704 West Tower  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
[www.oci.ga.gov](http://www.oci.ga.gov)

**January 25, 2017**  
**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Glenn Allen**  
**Phone: 404-463-0729**

### **HUDGENS VISITS TORNADO-DAMAGED COUNTIES; OFFERS ASSISTANCE TO STORM VICTIMS**

**ATLANTA** – Insurance Commissioner Ralph Hudgens has called on the state’s insurance companies to expedite storm damage claims resulting from this weekend’s deadly tornadoes in South Georgia.

Commissioner Hudgens visited the affected counties yesterday to assess the damage and meet with survivors. In the coming days, he plans to dispatch specialists from his Consumer Services Division to the area to assist survivors with their insurance needs.

“Individuals in these areas have suffered devastating losses and should receive special consideration with regards to their insurance claims,” Hudgens said. “I have notified the larger insurers and expect them to first and foremost take care of the immediate needs of their policyholders. This includes providing direct emergency funds for basic necessities such as food and shelter.”

Reports are that the storms that rolled through Georgia this weekend resulted in at least 15 deaths and an estimated \$100 million in property damage. Hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed, the Commissioner said.

Commissioner Hudgens recommends the following procedures to storm victims:

- Take care of your personal needs. If necessary, make arrangements for shelter.
- Secure your property from further damage or theft. For example, if your roof was damaged, cover the affected area with a tarp or plywood to protect your property from further damage, such as subsequent rains. Keep receipts of materials used for repairs; your insurance company will reimburse you for repair costs. If the damage is so severe that you have to leave the structure, remove all valuable items if there's nowhere in the home to secure them.

**(Continued)**

**Insurance tips**

- Contact your insurance company or agent. Many insurers will have on-site claims operations set up to handle the increases in claims. Your agent can provide you with claims forms and arrange for an insurance adjuster to visit your property or look at your automobile.
- If you are having problems with your claim or have questions, seek out one of the Department's on-site investigators, or contact our office at 1-800-656-2298. The Department offers telephone assistance until 6 p.m. nightly. We can also be reached online at [www.oci.ga.gov](http://www.oci.ga.gov).

“In the aftermath of a tragedy of this magnitude, those affected are naturally concerned about the fate of family and friends, and in many cases about finding a safe place to stay. Take care of these concerns first; my office will be there going forward to be certain that claims are paid,” Hudgens said.

###