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**Trusted Choice Independent Insurance Agents Offer Florence Recovery Tips**

*Follow these tips once authorities declare it is safe to return to homes and businesses.*

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia, Sept. 17, 2018— As residents of states affected by Hurricane Florence assess the damage in the coming days, Trusted Choice® independent insurance agents and the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America (IIABA or the Big “I”) advise consumers to take the following steps when it is safe to return to their homes:

**After the hurricane:**

• If you have evacuated, wait until authorities tell you it's safe before returning home.

• Be alert for tornadoes which can form as a result of hurricane conditions.

• Stay away from flood waters.

• Use a flashlight. Do not light matches or turn on electrical switches.

• Sniff for gas leaks. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows and evacuate. If you have any concerns, have the gas system checked by a professional.

• Do not touch wires or outlets.

• Check for frayed cords and for cracked or broken prongs and plugs.

• Turn off the main electrical circuit switch. Be careful to stand on a dry surface and do not touch the metal handle of the switch box. Use a piece of heavy rubber, plastic or a piece of dry wood to open the metal door and throw the switch. Share your concerns with a licensed electrician.

• Watch for holes in the floor, loose boards or hanging plaster.

• If your home has been flooded, check for snakes and other animals that may have entered the property.

• Before you start cleaning up debris, prepare an inventory of all damaged or destroyed personal property. If you can, videotape or photograph the damage.

• Take as many photos as safely possible to document damage and make temporary repairs to prevent further damage.

• Clean up any flammable or poisonous materials that may have been spilled.

• Dispose of all spoiled food immediately. If you have insurance coverage for spoiled food, document your losses.

• Hold off on permanent repairs until you've received approval for reimbursement.

• Save remnants of damaged or destroyed property for your insurance company adjuster, and do not sign agreements with contractors or anyone else until you have a chance to meet with your insurance adjuster.

• Keep a written record of everyone you talk to about your insurance claim, including the date of the conversation and a summary of what was said.

• Keep all receipts.

• Your pre-disaster home inventory will be of great assistance to you at this point. After you've examined everything and determined the extent of damage, call your independent insurance agent as soon as possible to file a claim.

To request an interview with a national spokesperson or a Trusted Choice® insurance agent in your area, please contact Sue Nester (broadcast), (301) 606-1601, or Katie Butler at (703) 706-5428.

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