

Shopping for homeowners insurance work sheet

Questions to ask about home insurance

Ask yourself these questions when shopping for homeowners insurance.

Check out the company

What is the insurance company's reputation? _____

- Check with your state insurance department to make sure the company is licensed in your state and see if they keep a record of complaints. Or go to the [NAIC Consumer Information Source](#) Web site.

What is the company's complaint ratio? _____

What is its financial rating? _____

- Go to www.ambest.com to see how they rank.

Discounts

Are any discounts offered? _____

- For instance, customers carrying homeowners and auto insurance from the same company will often receive a break on premiums. Other premium offsets could include:
 - Fire, smoke and burglar alarms
 - Being claim-free for a certain number of years
 - Some automatic sprinkler systems qualify for discounts

How much coverage do you need?

How much is your house worth? _____

Have you done renovations that have increased its value? _____

What are home values in your area as well as construction costs? _____

Have you done renovations that have increased its value? _____

- Consider getting extra coverage as an endorsement to your replacement-cost coverage to fill in the gap in the event of a worst-case scenario (think Hurricane Andrew or Hurricane Katrina).

Comparing policies

Home

What does the policy cover?_____

- Is it written as "all risk" or "named peril?"
(Hint: You want "all risk" -- it means your home is insured for all causes of loss except those specifically named as exclusions.)

Do you need specialty coverage to protect yourself against disasters?_____

Is loss-of-use coverage included?_____

- Under what circumstances does it kick in?_____
- What does it pay for?_____
- How long will it pay?_____

Contents

Does the policy offer cash value or replacement value for your belongings?_____

What about big items such as jewelry, art or even computers?_____

- What are your specialty items worth and how much will it cost to get them insured?_____

Liability

What is the liability coverage?_____

What is excluded from liability coverage?_____

How much coverage can you get from an umbrella policy and how much extra will it cost?_____

Claims

What is involved in the claims process?_____

- How does the company pay claims?_____
- How long do you have to buy replacements?_____
- If you decide not to replace the item at all, how will you be reimbursed?_____