

Adjusting the Loss

"Loss adjustment" is the process of establishing the value of the damaged property. This is the result of a joint effort among a number of parties. Basic parties to the process are the owner or occupant and the insurance company and its representatives.

The owner or occupant is required by the insurance contract to prepare an inventory and cooperate in the loss valuation process. An insurance agent may act as the adjuster if the loss is small. The insurer may send an adjuster who is a permanent member of the insurer's staff, or the company may hire an independent adjuster to act in its behalf. It is the insurance adjuster's job, as a representative of the insurance company, to monitor and assist in the loss valuation process and to bring the loss to a just and equitable settlement.

Either you or the insurer may hire the services of a fire damage restoration firm or fire damage service company. These firms provide a range of services that may include some or all of the following:

- * Securing the site against further damage
- * Estimating structural damage
- * Repairing structural damage
- * Estimating the cost to repair or renew items of personal property
- * Packing, transportation, and storage of household items
- * Securing appropriate cleaning or repair subcontractors
- * Storing repaired items until needed

It is important to coordinate with the insurance adjuster before contracting for any services. If you invade the insurer's responsibility area by contracting without its knowledge or consent, you may be left with bills to pay that otherwise would have been covered by the insurer