

Palm Beach Post

Managed repair programs help avoid the middleman

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Public adjusters want Florida's homeowners to believe that any and all managed repair programs to handle restoration and repairs in the event of a covered claim result in claims being unfairly adjusted. They paint insurance companies as strangers to their customers yet expect those same homeowners to trust them — public adjusters — even as they take a piece of the homeowners' insurance claim payout.

Homeowners should first ask themselves, what is it about fixing my home with the help of my company that public adjusters vehemently oppose? Is it just their selfless commitment to me, the homeowner they didn't even know until I had a claim, or could it just be that when a customer utilizes managed repair they (the public adjuster) are cut out of their middleman fee?

Your insurer is not only held to Florida's strict insurance laws but also the contract they and the homeowner both signed. The reality is that the Johnny-come-lately is the public adjuster with their aggressive ads, middleman fees and empty promises.

To say that managed repair programs do not benefit consumers is simply untrue. In fact, for the vast majority, these programs are the easiest way for homeowners to complete repairs through a trusted, pre-screened, licensed contractor. Would you want your elderly parent or grandparent dealing with five different contractors after an incident at their home?

What do you get with public adjusters? Scare tactics and promises from a middleman who wants to get more of your money, signing away your rights on the policy, delaying notice of claim to your insurer (frequently 30-120 days), receiving instructions not to speak with your insurance company's adjuster, and a higher probability of lengthy litigation.

Are public adjusters licensed or trained general contractors? No. Without managed repair, you are responsible for interviewing, managing and ensuring the contractor you choose is reputable and licensed, has a solid work plan, does the work to code and your satisfaction, and warranties the work.

Citizens and other insurance companies should be applauded for incentivizing policyholders to use managed repair programs to avoid unwarranted payouts to middlemen and trying to control runaway costs that increase insurance premiums.

Makes sense, doesn't it?

WILLIAM STANDER, TALLAHASSEE

Editor's note: William Stander is executive director of the Florida Property & Casualty Association.