



The role of the loss assessor

Managing a flood insurance claim can be an extremely complicated affair, which is in turn time consuming and stressful for the individual responsible for managing the claim. A loss assessor alleviates this stress by managing the whole claims process on your behalf.

As part of the claims management service, a loss assessor will typically offer the following services:

- supervise the initial drying and sanitisation of the property.
- help to find appropriate temporary accommodation for you and your family while the repairs are carried out, and arrange emergency funding to support you during this difficult time.
- bring in experts such as surveyors to assess the full extent of the structural damage.
- compile your insurance claim for buildings, contents and alternative accommodation, ensuring everything you're entitled to is covered.
- deal with your insurance company and their loss adjuster, taking all calls, answering all letters and attending all meetings either alongside you or on your behalf.
- negotiate the type of settlement you want: reinstatement, cash or diminution (loss of value).
- help you choose independent surveyors and contractors who will work in your best interests to restore your property.
- give you control over the refurbishment work, as well as the style and standard of fixtures and fittings, and look at any alterations you may like to incorporate while the building works are being carried out.

As the homeowner, you have ultimate control over your insurance claim. You can choose your loss assessor's style of management; this can range from handing over complete control (other than major decisions) to them, through to working in close partnership together throughout the process.

Put simply, the loss assessor can manage the entire insurance claims process for you, allowing you to focus on what matters most – keeping you and your family safe, and getting back into your property as quickly as possible.

When should you contact the loss assessor?

A loss assessor can assist you at any stage of a claim, however the sooner you bring them on board the better. Drafting in a loss assessor prior to submitting a claim will help ensure you remain in control and that you receive everything you are entitled to under the terms of your insurance policy.

How loss assessors work

Loss assessors will liaise with your insurance company and all other involved parties on your behalf, including brokers, surveyors, contractors, solicitors, loss adjusters etc. This means that every aspect of your claim will be managed by the loss assessor, from putting in the initial claim, to when you move back into your property.

Don't I need an adjuster?

There is a lot of confusion about the difference between loss adjusters and loss assessors. Whilst the two may sound similar, their roles in the insurance claim process are very different.

- Loss adjusters work for the insurance company. They are appointed and paid by the insurance company to 'adjust' the claim presented by you or your loss assessor.
- Loss assessors work for you, the policyholder. They are independent professionals who are employed by you to protect your interests and ensure you receive the very best settlement under the terms of your insurance policy.

Loss assessor fees

Depending which loss assessing firm you use, there is usually a degree of flexibility with regard to how you manage your claim. The most common scenarios are as follows:

1. The firm will assign you a loss assessor, chartered surveyor, contents specialist and builder. There is typically no fee for this arrangement.
2. Alternatively, you may prefer to use your own builder, in which case the firm will work with them to guide them through the claim process. You'll still be assigned a loss assessor, chartered surveyor and contents specialist, but by using your own builder you'll likely incur a small fee.

Choosing a loss assessor

With an abundance of loss assessors out there it can seem difficult to know which one to choose. Here is a list of questions to consider carefully when hiring a loss assessing company:

- How reputable are they? Check when the company was established, and in turn the level of experience the company has in handling residential claims like yours.
- Are they fully authorised? Legally, a loss assessor must be fully 'Authorised' by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). This means they have met the stringent standards required to manage an insurance claim on behalf of a policyholder. You can check whether a firm is authorised by visiting <http://www.fsa.gov.uk/register/home.do>

- Where are they located? Do they have a local team on hand to visit your property and work closely with you?
- What will it cost you? Some loss assessing companies may charge an initial fee, or a percentage of your settlement upon completion, for example.
- Do they have any case studies relating to claims similar to yours? Or even better, will they allow you to speak with their previous clients who have been in the same position as you?
- Who do they work with? Typically, as part of the loss assessing service the company will draft in contractors from their own trusted network. You are within your rights to ask who these contractors are, or indeed source your own contractors (although doing so may affect the fee).