

## Looking after yourself and your home as bad weather rolls in - AA Insurance

**Auckland, 15 November 2016** – As severe weather hits the country AA Insurance is urging customers with earthquake damaged homes to look after themselves first, and only attempt to secure their properties against the storms if it is safe to do so.

Strong winds and heavy rain have been forecast to continue to batter the country this week, with a MetService warning that winds in some areas could be powerful enough to lift roofs, bring down powerlines, damage trees and make driving difficult.

“Our first priority is your safety and that of your family,” says Simon Hobbs, Head of Claims at AA Insurance. “With the storms arriving, if you need emergency repairs, such as mending a hole in your roof or replacing smashed window panes, or you are unable to stay in your home and need assistance, then ring us on 0800 500 216 as soon as you can.

“If it is safe for you to do so, then check your property and repair anything that may be damaged, or could cause damage to another part of your, or your neighbours’, property. Secure or store away items such as outdoor furniture or garden equipment that could be blown about in the storm.

“However, even if there is storm damage on top of damage from Monday’s earthquake, you’ll still be covered by your insurance. There is no rush to make a claim unless you need us to arrange temporary accommodation or to do emergency repairs,” he continues.

### **AA Insurance advises its customers to stay safe:**

- Make sure you, your family and pets are safe
- Do not attempt to inspect or repair any damage until it is safe to do so
- Keep clear of broken windows or roofs
- Follow Civil Defence guidelines for your safety – [getthru.govt.nz](http://getthru.govt.nz)
- AA Insurance customers should call us on 0800 500 216 to report any damage to your property especially if you need emergency repairs.

### **Securing your property (if you can access it safely):**

- If there is water in your light fittings, turn your lights off and call an electrician immediately
- If it is safe to do so, place a tarpaulin over any areas where the roof is leaking.

- Pull curtains and drapes over windows to prevent injury from shattered or flying glass
- Unplug appliances which may be affected by electrical power surges. If power is lost unplug major appliances
- If the floors are wet, lift your furniture off the floor to prevent staining
- If possible, pack fragile items away until the aftershocks subside
- Don't drive unless you absolutely need to. If your vehicle has been damaged or suffered flooding it may be unsafe to drive
- Secure or move your outdoor furniture inside, or any debris that could go flying during a storm or high winds
- Keep or take photos of any damaged items, including spoiled food if your power has gone off or any other items you may have needed to dispose of – this is useful to confirm with EQC or your insurer what needs replacing

## **EQC advice**

There is no urgency to make a claim, however those customers who are ready to do so should follow these steps:

- Ring your insurer first if you need temporary accommodation or urgent repairs.
- EQC will be taking care of the first \$115k of house and \$23k of contents damage (inc gst), so if you have minor or moderate earthquake-related damage to your home or contents, you should contact EQC.
- You can lodge a claim by contacting EQC directly, or make a claim online via the EQC website.
- EQC will then let us know that you've made a claim with them.
- You have three months to make your claims with EQC for any non-urgent repairs, so you have time to look after any critical matters first.

“Once people have time to assess the damage they'll start contacting EQC or their insurer, to help with the damage, or make emergency plans,” Simon says. “However, as aftershocks are still happening, and bad weather is hitting the country, it's too soon to know the extent of the claims. At this stage it's more important for people to focus on their own safety and to contact us if they need our help.”

ENDS



### **About AA Insurance**

AA Insurance has demonstrated trusted expertise in home, contents, and car insurance in New Zealand since launching in 1994. We're a joint venture between New Zealand Automobile Association and Suncorp Group, and we employ over 650 staff to look after more than 345,000 customers and 650,000 policies.

We proudly support youth charity Blue Light, and the NRL Telstra Premiership and Holden Cup referees in New Zealand, and have been consistently recognised by: Reader's Digest Most Trusted Brands (since 2011), NZ Insurance Industry Awards (since 2012), IBM Kenexa Best Workplaces Survey (since 2008), Canstar Blue Most Satisfied Customers (since 2011), and the Colmar Brunton Corporate Reputation Index (since 2015) that recognises New Zealand's most successful companies.

AA Insurance has an A+ (Strong) Insurer Financial Strength Rating given by Standard and Poor's (Australia) Pty Ltd. For further information visit [www.aainsurance.co.nz](http://www.aainsurance.co.nz).

### **For more information please contact:**

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