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10 TIPS FOR WILDFIRE SURVIVORS WHEN DEALING WITH HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE

1. OBTAIN A COMPLETE COPY OF HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE POLICY, INCLUDING YOUR DECLARATIONS PAGE

i The law requires your insurance company to provide this to you FREE of charge within 30 days of your request. Ask your agent or insurer representative to explain how much coverage you have (1) to rebuild your home, (2) for your personal belongings, and (3) for living expenses. This should include an explanation of Extended Replacement Cost and Building Code Upgrade if applicable. Ask how to most effectively claim your coverage benefits.

2. TAKE NOTE OF YOUR ADDITIONAL LIVING EXPENSE (ALE) LIMITS

i You will also want to manage your ALE expenses in recognition of a long rebuilding process. Your time to collect ALE after a declared catastrophe is no less than 24 months even if your policy says otherwise; however, your amount of coverage is not increased. An extension of up to 12 additional months, for a total of 36 months, should be granted if you encounter delays beyond your reasonable control.

3. TRACK ALL OF YOUR ADDITIONAL EXPENSES THAT ARISE FROM HAVING TO LIVE IN ANOTHER LOCATION AWAY FROM YOUR HOME

i Note: your ALE reimbursement may be offset by your normal cost of living before the fire (i.e., ALE does not pay for your mortgage or expenses you would normally incur) but you are entitled to the same standard of living you had before the fire. ALE will pay for temporary rent, additional mileage, etc.

4. DOCUMENT ALL CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR ADJUSTER IN A “CLAIM DIARY”

i If your adjuster says something is excluded, limited, or subject to certain conditions, ask the adjuster to point to the specific provision in your policy being cited.

5. GET AT LEAST 1 LICENSED CONTRACTOR’S ESTIMATE OR BID ON THE COST TO REBUILD YOUR HOME

i This will allow you to get a reasonable sense of the actual cost as compared to your coverage limits. While your insurance company may provide its own estimate, it may contain errors or fail to reflect local conditions or demand surge. Demand surge reflects price increases following a major disaster when contractors and materials are in short supply (as will certainly be the case in rebuilding following the Camp Fire).

Please Note: These tips are for general guidance only and are not a substitute for legal advice.

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6. CALL THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE HOTLINE FOR HELP AT 1-800-927-4357

i You may also file a complaint with the California Department of Insurance online at: <http://www.insurance.co.gov/01-consumers/101-help/>

7. UNDERSTAND YOU CAN PURCHASE OR REBUILD AT ANOTHER LOCATION & STILL RECEIVE FULL REPLACEMENT COST BENEFITS

i Full replacement cost benefits include Building Code Upgrade and Extended Replacement Cost benefits if those were included in your policy and necessary to rebuild the insured dwelling. You also have the right to rebuild using the contractor of your choosing. In order to reduce the cost of rebuilding, you might consider a community wide development approach utilizing a common builder.

8. ASSESS YOUR SITUATION – DO NOT RUSH INTO ANY DECISIONS

i This includes decisions about contractors, lawyers or public adjusters – consider your mortgage/ employment/ financial situation, your age, children’s schools, your willingness to deal with construction issues (no matter who your contractor is). The insurance process is a series of important decisions over a long period of time, but few if any need to be made today.

9. DO NOT ASSUME YOU HAVE INADEQUATE COVERAGE, BUT UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE DOES NOT COVER EVERYTHING

i The adequacy of your limits needs to be addressed on a case specific basis to determine how much it will cost to rebuild your home and whether your limits, including extended replacement cost coverage if applicable, are adequate. But, understand many damages are often not covered by your homeowner’s insurance policy such as: emotional distress, soil/land erosion, landscaping or lost income, and more.

10. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR CLAIM WITH YOUR HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE AND YOUR POTENTIAL CLAIM AGAINST PG&E

i While many wildfire survivors have homeowners insurance and feel they are adequately insured, there are many types of damage that your homeowners policy likely does not cover. If PG&E is found to be the cause of the Camp Fire, you will possibly have a claim against PG&E. This potential claim against PG&E is separate from your homeowners claim.

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