

Homeowners and Hazard insurance premiums are experiencing significant increases nationwide, with insurance carriers altering the geographic areas they cover, the types of properties insured, and the requirements for maintaining existing policies or obtaining new coverage. These changes may lead to loss or reduction of coverage and higher premiums for the same coverage. Homeowners are advised to engage with their insurance carrier at least 45 days before their policy renewal date to mitigate potential impacts and allow time for necessary adjustments. If a policyholder wishes to change insurance carriers, they must inform the Rural Development Insurance Department at [RHInsurance@usda.gov](mailto:RHInsurance@usda.gov) at least 30 days prior to the renewal date, including their mortgage loan account number in all correspondence. If Rural Development has already paid the renewal premium and the policyholder decides to switch carriers, they should cancel their current policy with the existing insurance carrier, request a refund directly, and use that refund to pay the new carrier. It is crucial to ensure that the effective date of the new policy aligns with the cancellation date of the existing policy to avoid any lapse in coverage. Additionally, Rural Development must be listed as the mortgagee on the insurance policy. Lender placed insurance is available to protect the home but offers limited coverage, excluding personal contents and liability, and is generally more expensive than traditional homeowners insurance. For comprehensive protection of personal assets, homeowners insurance is recommended. Inquiries regarding insurance should include the account number and can be directed to [RHInsurance@usda.gov](mailto:RHInsurance@usda.gov).