# **Without Prejudice**

# Tips to Optimizing Large & Total Property Loss Claims

From Ontario's Dedicated Large Loss Rebuilder



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# Past President's Night



# LOCATION | WESTIN TORONTO AIRPORT DATE | MARCH 22ND 2023 REGISTRATION | 5:30 PM COCKTAILS | 6:00 PM DINNER | 7:00 PM TICKET COST | \$110 + HST









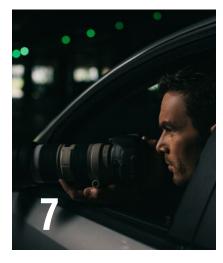


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Official Journal of the Ontario Insurance Adjusters Association

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**Investigator** Designation Program for Licensed Private Investigators

Customer Service is Disrupting the Insurance Sector

**Optimizing the** 

claim process

large property loss



Discover the Secrets to Sustainable Construction

How Insurance Adjusters Can Protect Clients and the Environment.







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Real Estate Fraud and Title Insurance Claims

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### **Hello Readers!**

ell, it seems that Spring is in the air, at least for those that are in Southern Ontario (thanks Wiarton Willy for a great prediction!) As we start to move out of Winter and into Spring, I also feel like it

is a great time for a fresh start and renewed energy. These feelings that Spring brings for me align well with what is happening at the OIAA.

March is such an exciting month for our organization. On the 22nd we will be electing a new Secretary of the OIAA for the 2023-2024 OIAA Year and officially appointing our Senior Executive for that same time period. Our incoming Senior Executive will take the reigns later this year and guide the OIAA into the year ahead ensuring we continue to serve the needs of our members and industry partners.

Following our regular board meeting and Secretary Elections on the evening of March 22nd, I am excited to share that we will be hosting our first in person Past President's Night at The Westin Toronto Airport. Our Past President's night is intended to honour the hard work and contributions of our past leaders along with Honorary Life Members who had made meaningful contributions to the OIAA and have been honoured with this prestigious recognition.



If you are interested in purchasing tickets for Past President's Night, please head to our website at www.oiaa.com.

Happy Reading, Kyle Case, FCIP, CRM President, OIAA

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2022 Trade Show @ Come Back to Town Event	Joe Cumming	Jennifer Brown, Shawna Gillen	
2023 Career Fair	Terry Doherty	Shawna Gillen, Jennifer Brown	

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Mentoring (Ways and Means)	Kyle Case		
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Holiday Party	Emily Feindel	Carrie Keogh, Michelle Fields	
Golf Tournament	Joe Cumming	Jason Saucier, Mike Bottan	
September Kick Off@Come Back To Town	Kyle Case	Simone Cybulski	

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# **Without Prejudice**

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# Know Your Investigator

Designation Program for Licensed Private Investigators



#### By: Nino Calabrese, CPIO-MI, CII

rivate Investigators are used by insurance adjusters on a variety of claims. The services offered by a PI, include but are not limited to, surveillance, asset investigations for subrogation, locate of witnesses or insureds, motive investigations, statements, employment interviews, neighbourhood inquiries, open-source investigations, video pixelation and enhancement, background investigations, SIU handling and document services.

The skill level between investigators can vary drastically. Although many investigators may be very efficient at surveillance, they may not be as comfortable conducting some of the other services offered by our industry due to lack of training and experience. You may not know if you have an investigator on your file who is new to the business or one that has been in the industry for several years and is experienced. A licence is required to be a Private Investigator in Ontario if you perform work, "for renumeration that consists of primarily conducting investigations to provide information on the character, actions, business, occupation, or whereabouts of a person" (Private Investigator Study Guide, Section 1 - Introduction to the private investigation industry, https://www.ontario. ca). The PI Licence is issued by the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN). According to the Private Security and Investigative Services Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 34, s. 10 (1), the requirements to obtain a PI Licence include the following: must have a clean criminal record, must be 18 years of age or older, be legally entitled to work in Canada, and has successfully completed all PI training and testing (test score must be at least 77%).

The PI training involves 50 hours of either classroom or web-based instruction by a provincially approved facility. This training focuses on the legalities and practical knowledge of the trade and not on the specific nuances of conducting an insurance related investigation, which typically happens with on-the-job training, courses, and experience.

How do you know if the investigator on your file has the experience and the proper training to handle your claim? This issue has been identified by the Council of Professional Investigators Ontario (CPIO). In the About Us section of their website:

# "The CPIO is a non-profit organization, which serves to ensure that the professional investigation sector in Ontario is comprised of investigative experts who are professional, trustworthy, and effective.

Additionally, CPIO is uniquely positioned to represent investigators and set the standard by strategically creating training, networking and legislative platforms all designed to provide the public with the most professional investigative services possible in the marketplace."

In 2020, after discussions with SOLGEN, the CPIO went further by introducing a Professional Designation Program for Ontario Private Investigators. A Designation Committee was established and tasked with administering Designations according to the Designation Protocols developed by the CPIO Board of Directors. The Designations recognize achievements, qualifications, training, continuing education, and professionalism.

# The three-tier system encourages new investigators to participate in the program, while also recognizing the accomplishments of more senior investigators.

Each tier is based on the completion of mandatory educational courses offered through the CPIO, holding a valid Private Investigator Licence, and being a CPIO Member in good standing.

The first tier of the Designation Program is for investigators with a minimum of 2000 hours (one year) experience to be certified as a Professional Investigator with a post nominal of CPIO-PI. The second tier applies to those with a minimum of 7500 hours (five years) experience for them to be certified as a Senior Investigator with a post nominal of CPIO-SI. The third tier, applies to investigators with at least 15,000 hours (ten years) and will receive the designation of Certified Master Investigator, CPIO-MI. Each level requires continuing education to maintain the Designation. The CPIO offers courses such as Professional Ethics, OSINT Techniques, Social Media Intelligence and Investigations, Surveillance, Note Taking and Report Writing, Investigative Interviewing, Critical Thinking, Document Analysis, Relevant Legislation, and Deception & Body Language.

It is always a good idea to **Know Your Investigator** and ensure they have the proper qualifications and training to handle your requests.





# About the Author Nino Calabrese, CPIO-MI, CII

Nino Calabrese sits on the board of the Council of Professional Investigator as Director, Strategic Planning. He is also a certified international investigator. A versatile professional, Nino brings over thirty-five years of experience in both Corporate and

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# **Customer Service is Disrupting the Insurance Sector**

By: Leah Sangster, CIP

he old saying "customer service is king" has never been more true. With businesses having to constantly transform the way they do business to meet ever-changing covid protocols and economic challenges, companies have had to work extra hard to impress their customers. But how can insurance companies better meet customer expectations?

With higher customer expectations around fast, convenient services, for home insurance providers, the looming threat of disrupting forces is very real. According to J.D. Power, a third of Canadian consumers are now open to considering insurance from digital companies like Google and Amazon, a number that's up from 12% in 2015.

Although digital strides have been made, many insurance companies still need to catch up with other industries. Younger consumers are keen to engage with companies from their phones, for example via social media and mobile-optimized websites. At the same time, policyholders across all generations are jumping on opportunities to manage their insurance more conveniently. In fact, 67% of insurance consumers have used a mobile device or app for their latest insurance transaction, including paying a bill or making a claim (J.D. Power).

For home insurance companies, many are at a turning point. Either they find ways to boost the customer experience or risk missing out on many of the opportunities to make their policyholders happy and boost their bottom line.

# **The Critical Role of Customer Satisfaction**

Insurance companies operate in a highly regulated, highly competitive market where it's difficult to differentiate policies without lowering prices. Because of new, online tools such as online policy comparison websites, it's never been easier for consumers to directly compare policies and prices. With those two factors in mind, how can insurance companies set themselves apart from their competition?

Price is, of course, still a major deciding factor for home insurance customers, but for a number of reasons (extreme weather events, evolution of homes and building codes, SMART technology), reducing insurance rates is often off the table. Instead, providing great customer service is one of the only ways that insurance companies can gain a competitive edge.



Using car insurance as an example, a 2016 McKinsey report shows that insurers that have provided consistently great customer service gain a number of advantages, compared to insurance companies with inconsistent customer service performance.

Since there's no reason to believe that auto insurance customers are widely different from home insurance policyholders, this data should be a compelling argument for a laser-focus on customer service and satisfaction.

#### INSURANCE COMPANIES WITH LEADING CUSTOMER SERVICE ARE:



## **High Service Expectations**

#### THE VALUE OF CONVENIENCE



Consumer expectations have changed dramatically when it comes to the level of customer service they receive from a company. With new generations of digital citizens on the market for home insurance, insurers are faced with a balancing act between wooing new, tech-savvy consumers who have high expectations around fast, convenient services while retaining their existing customer base.

In many other industries, digital technology has completely up-ended the customer experience, from researching companies to buying and getting customer service support. One-click shopping, 24-hour, instant customer support, quick and free delivery, clear and transparent pricing. Existing and potential policyholders bring their experiences and expectations of fast, convenient service from other sectors to the table when they evaluate their home insurance providers.

One way of looking at this development is to conclude that policyholders are becoming more demanding. On the other hand, from a customer perspective, it seems reasonable to look for an insurance provider that makes life easier for them.

Although many insurance providers have started

offering apps and other digital tools, it's not all about the technology. It's more about finding opportunities to provide a consistently high level of customer service and communication across product lines and customer service channels. Without this true, deeprooted commitment to customer service, developing an app without the underlying service framework is a bit like putting lipstick on a pig.

To rise to the challenge, insurance providers must take a hard look at whether their processes are geared to meet customer expectations.

## **Streamlining Customer Service**

Fast. Convenient. Personalized. These should be the pillars for every system an insurance company puts in place.

## **Automation and Outsourcing**

Systems that speed up policyholder communications and claims processing will be key for home insurance providers to increase customer satisfaction and retention now and in the years to come.

For some companies, streamlining processes means finding technological solutions that make claim handling easier and more automated. For other insurers, a better process would be outsourcing specialized services.

Although a complex claim will still require several manual touchpoints, handling the simpler home insurance claims more easily will allow adjusters to focus on those trickier, more work-intensive claims.

## Communication

During the claims process, there are a number of ways adjusters can make use of communication tools to dazzle their policyholders.

First, you'll need to know what platforms your policyholders use and like. There are so many new ways to interact with policyholders such as texting updates, live chat, or FaceTime, or even using social media messaging systems. Again, it's not about the particular technology, but about convenience for the policyholder. If they are texting all the time but never check their email, why not meet them where they are at? A better, more convenient experience does not only translate into improved customer retention, it potentially offers a more valuable product. A survey from PWC shows that 43% of consumers are willing to pay more for greater convenience.

## **Lower Cost of Claims**

Not only can better systems, outsourcing services, and automation boost customer satisfaction, it can also drive down the cost of handling claims by as much as 30%, according to McKinsey.

With an improved, more automated process for handling claims, adjusters can also focus their time more strategically. Rather than being inundated by a large volume of claims ranging from simple to complex, handling simple claims can be taken out via automated processes and specialized service providers. That means adjusters can focus their attention on resolving more complex claims successfully and prevent costly disputes and other nuisances along the way.

# **Gearing Up for the Home Insurance of Tomorrow**

Providing excellent customer experience and satisfaction has never been as important as now. Demonstrating value while finding cost-saving measures are equally critical for insurers. Meeting high customer service expectations is poised to be a game-changer for the home insurance industry in the years to come.



#### Leah Sangster, CIP Accomsure - ALE Management Solutions:

Leah Sangster is the Ontario Regional Manager with Accomsure – ALE Management Solutions, based out of Markham. Leah brings over 20 years of combined experience in insurance, temporary accommodation, real estate, and marketing. She specializes in the ALE – additional living expense – portion of household claims. With layers-deep knowledge of Ontario's temporary housing and real estate industries, combined with her insurance education and experience, Leah has a truly unique approach to ALE.





Ken is currently exclusively focused on priority/loss transfer arbitrations and mediations in Ontario. Clients benefit from Ken's extensive experience in personal injury and insurance litigation.

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# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ONTARIO, CANADA - WP Radio, the premier insurance adjusters podcast in Ontario, is excited to announce the upcoming season of guests, episodes and interviews for 2023.

The new season will feature a wide range of industry experts, including insurance adjusters, industry leaders, and policy experts, providing valuable insights and information to listeners.

"We are thrilled to bring our listeners a new season of engaging and informative content," said Terry Doherty, host of WP Radio. "We've been doing this for more than half a decade now and we're still just as excited and looking forward to speaking with all of our guests every time we record an episode."

WP Radio will be continuing with rolling out MyKey's series 'Home Away From Home', on the podcast network and will additionally be at all Ontario Insurance Adjusters Association events, recording live with guests, sponsors and other members of the industry.

In 2023, WP Radio is focusing on expanding their production of branded content shows, as part of their mission to constantly grow and enhance their roster of episodes.

"We are committed to providing our listeners with the most valuable and up-to-date information in the insurance industry," said Doherty. "The new season of WP Radio will be an essential resource for anyone working in the insurance industry or interested in learning more about it."

Listeners can tune in to the podcast on all major platforms, including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts.

For more information on all branded content productions, options for sponsorship, and guest spots on interviews, please contact Kieran Doherty by phone or email.

Kieran Doherty Executive Producer, WP Radio Podcast Network Email: Kieran@Doherty664.com Phone: (315) 771-8499

# Optimizing The Large Property Loss Claim Process

By: Tom Streek, President - Rebuild Response Group



## INTRODUCTION

Ihen a large loss claim lands on your desk, it typically becomes a file that remains open for at least a year. Coordinating, communicating, and resolving conflict can be a challenge, even in the best of times. As the only provincial-wide large property loss insurance builder with over twelve years of turn-key reconstruction experience, we thoroughly understand the sensitivities of processing these claims to successful completion, while respecting strict timelines. This expertise is the foundation for our standardized rebuilding model to provide insurance adjusters and insured policyholders the efficient claims process they deserve and require. From the perspective of the contractor, here are a few tips that we have noticed insurance adjusters perform efficiently during each step of the process - enabling all parties to a more fluid and cohesive rebuild.

After an unexpected emotional loss, insured policyholders are launched into a claims process in which they have no understanding. Showing genuine empathy and taking time to support the insurance policyholder with the quidance and understanding they need is essential to building a connection with trust. Often, the policyholder has already been told horror stories from people they know, telling them they should be wary of working with insurance companies and contractors. Trust with the policyholder is the number one factor that will efficiently assist in the claims process, but stigmas can cause an uphill battle in building trust with the policyholder. No matter how insignificant it may seem to you, every interaction is

an opportunity to make or break trust. For example, following through with commitments and sticking to timelines demonstrates integrity. Actively listening to your policyholder and being thoroughly responsive promptly shows your respect.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

As various contractors begin estimating, having a shared tool to assess the replacement cost is invaluable. Without one, there is often a large discrepancy in the detail within each estimate and, subsequently, very different price points.

A third-party firm specializing in engineering and/ or quantifying expertise typically prepares a scope. Even though it does consume time ahead of the actual estimating process, it will save time, minimize errors, and potentially prevent frustration in reviewing estimates afterward. If you are skilled in understanding the various elements of a structure from top to bottom, you, as the insurance adjuster, can also prepare a scope. In addition to data collection from photos, file information, and the claimant's recollection preloss, you would benefit from an awareness of code upgrades or other building design methods.



Lastly, an experienced contractor can create a scope. If you compile accurate details, measurements, and information into a software program or construction template, various contractors can utilize it to price against the "one" document. Ultimately, it would be best if you were closely consulting the claimant about the scope development to ensure they feel it is accurate. Building trust early on is essential with the claimant, so be transparent with the document that forms the replacement value and future budget.

#### **CODE UPGRADES**

Each year, there is a new interpretation of the most recent code or a specific municipality that determines an alternate approach or method of inspection requirements.

The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) revises its codes and regulations from time to time as well. Whether it's the OBC (Ontario Building Code) or other agencies, conservation departments, health units, or utility companies changing the policies and standards, various costs and logistics surface almost every time there is a large loss claim.

Understanding the claimant's policy limits as per Code and Bylaw upgrades early on will often prevent frustration or misunderstandings for all parties. Sometimes, new costs will surface when a code or requirement is acknowledged well into the rebuild

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process. Supportive documentation is required, followed by cost estimating.

Typically, investigations or site inspections after applications are submitted incur costs. These details will generate a cost to the claimant in most cases.

The most common code upgrades we see are septic systems, insulation R values, smoke detectors in bedrooms, and HRV air exchange systems. Other common challenges include pre-existing zoning, property setbacks, structural building code, and environmental/conservation issues.

## **SOURCING ESTIMATES**

Securing qualified and insurance savvy contractors for demolition and replacement estimating is vital to provide the most accurate pricing from integrity and professional point-of-view. Performing due diligence on references and business reputations can provide assurance accordingly.

It's important to understand from a supportive engineer review whether total or partial removal of a building is required for accurate demolition estimating. It would help if you also considered temporary shoring, stabilizing, and perimeter risk assessment at this stage.

A designated substance report (DSR) is required to determine if any contamination or environmental hazards are present within or surrounding the property loss. If a third-party consultant has not yet provided a DSR, you should advise the contractors to include the cost to conduct a DSR within their demolition estimates. If any abatement is required, ensure that contractors have priced accordingly.

Your initial release of thorough information and request for estimates is critical to minimize time delays.

## **COMPARING ESTIMATES**

The estimate comparison phase of the claim process can result in a very frustrating and confusing scenario. Many contractors that do not have proper time management skills or are short staffed will inflate the price due to their economies of scales, which will unbalance other accurate estimates in the claims process. You can prevent significantly differing estimate prices by ensuring that all contractors closely follow the scope. If the insurer approves the cost, you can hire a third-party quantifier to help mitigate any discrepancies as well.

An effective way to narrow down the estimates in terms of their content and quality is for you (if you feel qualified) or the claimant to conduct a general review of the estimate from start to finish.

If there are significant omissions or inconsistencies in the content, the "quantifying" of the cost will produce widely varying estimates. If there are any inconsistencies in the quotes, inquire with the contractors to close the gaps.

In some cases, you or the claimant can remove inaccurate/unrealistic low or high estimates from the bidding process. Unfortunately, the claimant can lose trust in the process or especially the contractors, in some cases.



It is common for one to recognize some minor exclusions in any quality estimate provided, followed up with revisions as needed. The goal is dual – provide the claimant with the general range of replacement costs, but give the claimant a sense of competency and trust that their rebuild compensation budget is fair and well supported.

Due to insurance adjusters and claimants possessing a wide spectrum of construction cost understanding, a diligent, sensitive, and thorough approach is required.

Estimating is the essential basis for rebuilding or processing a payout on a large loss claim. Establishing the groundwork on what the estimating is based on is vital. Ongoing communication and accuracy conveyed to the claimant are parallel components that you can not underestimate or ignore.

## **BUDGET DETERMINATION & CLAIM DIRECTION**

The claim direction is determined based on available funds, policy limits, mortgage/lender approvals, insured's interest for a cash-payout, etc. It's essential to understand which direction the claim will follow to prevent further time delays in the overall process.

Clear communication between the insurer and the insured with the ability to resolve a potential disagreement regarding policy payouts versus policy limits can further prevent legal costs and associated delays accordingly.

Understanding the type of coverage (ex: whether the policy includes GRC or not) can significantly impact the insured's ability to replace what they had based on current pricing.

This stage of the claim process is where the situation can have a negative or positive tone based on the insurer or the insured response and consideration of the financial impact.

It's not uncommon to see the insured rely on their own legal review/counsel, which can be productive, as they make large decisions within this stage of the claim.

# **ONGOING PROGRESS & PAYMENTS**

Once the insured decides on the claim process direction, typically, they commit to a contractor. Ensuring all signed documents have been processed with the insurer is vital to provide a common understanding of the payment schedule and the performance guidelines and expectations. Any involvement from a mortgagor/lender needs to be clearly defined and whether payments are to be copayable or distributed in a preferred manner needs to be outlined.

Further monitoring and site inspections will allow you to better report to the insurer and maintain a sense of confidence based on ongoing reporting. Weekly progress reports with pictures are strongly encouraged to be provided to the adjuster from the contractor.

Upon project completion, further documentation (including Tarion residential registration, if required) and approvals must be processed between the insured and the insurer to close the file as soon as possible.

Ideally, you've resolved content quantifying by this point with any remaining additional living expenses (ALE) paid and concluded.

#### SUMMARY

The ultimate goal in a large property loss claim is client satisfaction. For the builder, they essentially serve two clients (insured and insurer) with a significant interest in the same claim. As the insurance professional/adjuster, you will achieve this client satisfaction with thorough communication, solid problem solving, and streamlining of the process between the insurer and the insured. While there are certainly factors within a large property loss claim process that are not within your control, focusing on what you can do to mitigate issues, communication gaps, and time delays will optimize the project for everyone involved. You have the power to positively influence the large loss claim process for all parties.

We hope these tips empower you to excel in your role as an insurance adjuster.



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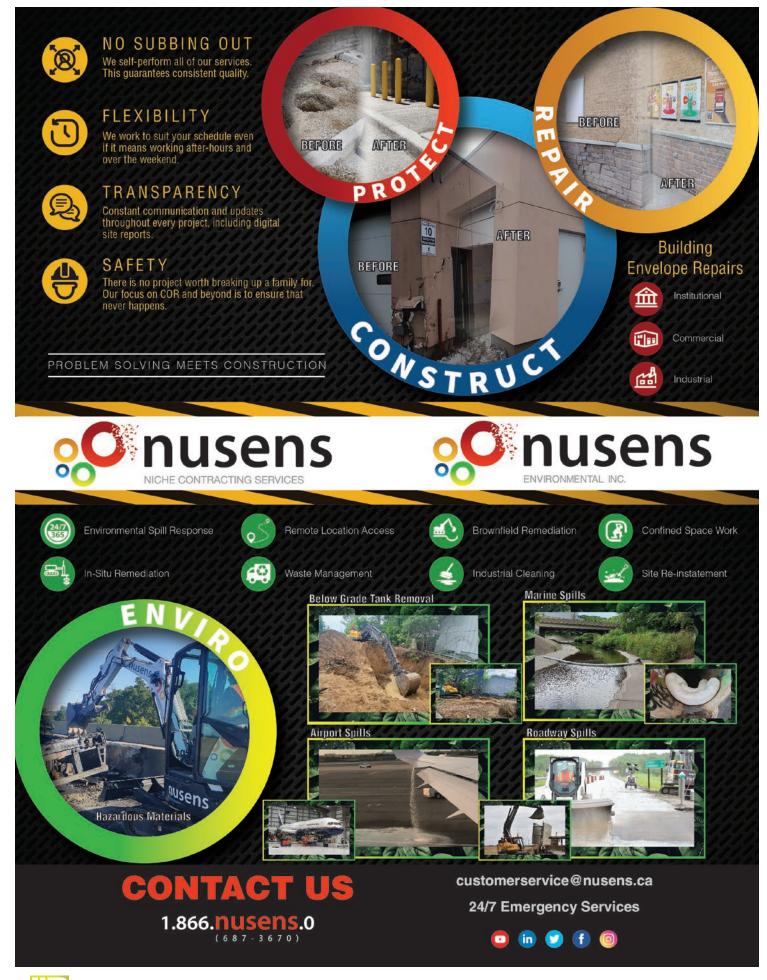
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# Chapter Spotlight Get to Know the... THOUSAND ISLANDS CHAPTER

# Well, it has been a wild ride in Eastern Ontario!

irst was the Derecho Storm, one of the most impactful thunderstorms in Canadian history with winds up to 190 km/h hit on May 21st, 2022, devastating cottage country. Then on June 16th, 2022 we had storm bursts with wind speeds peaking at 115 km/h. Finally on July 24th, 2022, a tornado with estimated wind speeds of 190 km/h devastated an area from Marmora to Madoc and Tweed.

Let's just say that ALL of our professionals have been working very hard over the

last year. We all should be very proud of the numerous people we have assisted and all deserve a pat-on-theback. I personally am very thankful for the assistance received by all during this very difficult time.

With the storms and COVID behind us, we are hoping to move forward with some in-person meetings and enjoying our annual events. We were able to hold our annual golf tournament in September at Colonnade Golf & Country Club in Joyceville in September 2022, which was well attended despite not having the best golf weather. Fun was had by all in spite of the rain and colder temperatures.

With chapter proceeds, we were happy to donate \$2,500.00 to a local charitable fundraising project called "The Shoebox Program", which donates items to women in need in the Kingston area.

Looking forward to what 2023 has to offer. Best wishes to you all!!

N N

hen we experience catastrophic events like the derecho storm that tore through Southeastern Ontario in May 2022, the limits of our work-life balance are tested. Adjusters, contractors, appraisers, and consultants are all at the mercy of Mother Nature and the property damage left behind. While this can take a toll on adjusters and other insurance professionals, it also comes at the expense of family members who bear the brunt of their loved ones working long hours for months after the weather event occurred.

The pandemic and subsequent labour shortage has left many parts of the industry understaffed. In the Thousand Islands area, adjusters and contractors have had to work extremely hard to manage the volume of claims over the past year.

Personally, as an independent adjuster and father of three young children, the burden of long hours is shared with my wife. Other professionals may have other family members and loved ones upon which they rely.

So while I encourage all insurance professionals in Southeastern Ontario to give themselves a pat-onthe-back for our work in 2022 and early 2023, I would also ask that we celebrate those who support us at home. Cheers to the partners, grandparents, children, grandchildren, and other family members who make it all possible.

#### **Duncan Southall, Chapter Delegate**



Shari Hamilton - President, Thousand Islands



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# Discover the Secrets to Sustainable Construction

# How Insurance Adjusters Can Protect Clients and the Environment.

By: Lance Pizzariello, M.Sc., C.E.T., A.Sc.T.,

ustainability has become a priority for everyone in the insurance industry, from adjusters and insurers to restoration contractors. The challenge of reaching sustainable construction is no longer just about protecting the environment; it's about giving clients peace of mind that their property will be restored in an environmentally conscious manner. But how can we ensure our clients' homes and businesses are reconstructed responsibly? Discovering the secrets to successful,

areen

construction

It has been around since ancient times when architects and builders focused on designing and constructing structures that stood the test of time and used resources efficiently. In the

> modern age, sustainability in construction involves much more than just building materials - it encompasses everything from energy efficiency to reducing waste during the building process. The

overall goal of sustainability

starts with having an understanding of what sustainability really means, as well as why it matters. In this blog post, we'll explore some critical components necessary for achieving successful sustainable construction projects -- such as utilizing specific materials and efficient equipment -- while also discussing key considerations when involved in green efforts throughout the duration of any project. By embracing a tone that is both educational and informative, you can learn effective strategies to help protect your clientele — while also helping them live more sustainably!

# Introduction: Defining Sustainability in Construction and Explaining Why It Matters

Sustainability in construction is not a new concept.

in construction is to ensure that buildings are designed and constructed to minimize their impact on the environment, preserve resources for future generations, and provide comfortable living spaces for people

Sustainability in construction takes into consideration all aspects of the building process from design to completion. During the design phase, architects must be sure to consider how materials will interact with each other, how well they can withstand exposure to natural elements, and how efficient they will be when it comes to conserving energy. Once a plan has been put together, builders must be mindful of using resources responsibly during the actual construction process (for example by reducing waste generated by tools or unused materials). Finally, integrating green

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technologies such as solar panels or LED lighting into a structure can help reduce its energy costs even further.

At its core, sustainability in construction is about looking ahead. By taking measures like these into account during any project's planning stage, builders can create structures that are both environmentally friendly and cost-efficient while still meeting people's needs. As long as these principles remain top-of-mind throughout any project's lifetime – from conception through completion – it's possible to create structures that benefit both individuals and their surroundings for years to come.

# Discussing Key Components Required to Achieve Successful Sustainable Construction Projects

Achieving successful sustainable construction projects is essential for the longevity of our infrastructure and environment. Projects must be designed, implemented, and managed with sustainability in mind to ensure they provide a longterm benefit and have minimal environmental impact. To facilitate successful sustainable construction projects, multiple key components need to be taken into consideration.

The first component of successful sustainable construction projects is the design process. Designers should seek to optimize the use of materials, reduce waste, and create efficient systems that promote energy conservation. Additionally, designers should consider factors such as future maintenance costs and durability when selecting materials or processes for the project. The second component is implementation. Execution needs to ensure highquality standards are met and all stakeholders' expectations are met in terms of safety standards, budget control, timeline adherence and overall project success. The third component is management during the duration of the project. This includes everything from managing the workforce on site to minimizing disruptions caused by the construction process itself. Finally, monitoring post-construction performance is essential for verifying that sustainability goals were met in terms of energy consumption or materials used.

In summary, there are four main components required for successful sustainable construction projects: design optimization; quality execution; effective

management; and monitoring post-construction performance. All stakeholders involved in a project must understand these components so they can collaborate effectively to achieve maximum efficiency with minimal environmental impact.

# Identifying Sustainable Materials and Equipment to Utilize

When it comes to choosing the right materials and equipment for a project, sustainability should be top of mind. With increasing concerns about the environment and global warming, it is more important now than ever that we take steps to reduce our carbon footprint and make sure we are using materials and equipment in an environmentally friendly way. It can be difficult to determine which materials and equipment are truly sustainable,



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so it is important to do your research.

First, try to find items made from renewable sources such as bamboo or hemp. These materials tend to have a lower impact on the environment since they can be regrown in a short amount of time compared to traditional resources like wood or metal. Additionally, look for items made with recycled content such as recycled plastic or aluminum. Not only does this help reduce waste but it also helps conserve resources because fewer new products need to be created when old ones can be reused.

Another way to identify sustainable materials is by looking at the composition of items you're considering purchasing. Look for natural fibres like cotton, wool or linen rather than synthetic fabrics that may contain petroleum-based ingredients. Whenever possible opt for items made with fewer chemicals or toxins that can leech into the soil or water supply when not handled properly.

Finally, try to source locally produced products whenever possible; these often have lower transportation emissions because they don't need to travel long distances before reaching their destination. It's also worth researching companies that use ethical production processes and treat their workers fairly; this will help ensure that your money goes towards a business that puts environmental stewardship first while still providing customers with quality goods and services.

By taking the time to identify sustainable materials and equipment you can help reduce your carbon footprint while still getting the job done effectively. By doing so you'll also support businesses that prioritize eco-friendly manufacturing practices and responsible labour practices - both of which ultimately benefit us all!

## Discourse on Considerations That Must Be Made throughout the Duration of a Project

For any project to be successful, several factors must be considered throughout its duration. One of the most important is risk management. It's vital that any potential risks are identified and addressed early in the project. That way, if something does go wrong, you can have a plan in place for how to address it. Additionally, when it comes to budgeting, you need to make sure that all costs are taken into account and that there are enough funds available to cover them throughout the entire duration of the project. This means being aware of ongoing costs as well as unexpected ones that may arise.

Communication is also key when it comes to successful projects. Everyone involved should know exactly what their role is, what tasks they need to do and when they need to have them done. Things can easily get off track if everything isn't clear from the beginning and deadlines aren't met or tasks not completed properly. Regular updates should also be provided so that everyone knows where the project stands at all times.

Finally, there must also be an overall goal or vision for the project and all decisions made must work towards achieving this goal or vision. This should remain consistent throughout the duration of the project and shouldn't vary based on changing circumstances or personal preferences. By staying focused on this overarching vision, teams are more likely to stay motivated and committed throughout the course of a project and complete it successfully in less time than expected.

## Summarizing Strategies to Help Protect Clients While Encouraging Them to Live More Sustainably

Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important issue for many individuals, organizations, and businesses. As such, clients must be encouraged to live more sustainably while being protected from risks such as environmental hazards or financial loss. Fortunately, many strategies can help ensure client safety while also helping them to live more sustainably.

One way to encourage sustainability is by providing clients with incentives to use green products and services. For example, offering discounts on environmentally friendly items and services or providing rewards points for customers who use sustainable products are both effective methods of encouraging clients to make more eco-friendly choices. Additionally, providing information about the environmental benefits of specific products

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or services can help educate clients about the importance of sustainability and motivate them to make better decisions when purchasing these goods and services.

Another strategy to protect clients while promoting sustainability is implementing policies that limit their exposure to hazardous materials or dangerous activities. This includes establishing clear rules prohibiting the use of certain chemicals or activities that could be damaging to either the



environment or human health and safety. Additionally, implementing renewable energy sources within a business' operations can help reduce carbon emissions while also protecting clients from potential energy-related risks.

Finally, businesses should provide clients with access to resources that can help them learn more about sustainability and make informed decisions regarding their own practices. Creating educational materials or hosting events focused on sustainability topics can be effective in teaching clients how they can contribute positively towards their well-being as well as the overall environment around them. Also, making resources available online can allow customers to access this information at any time in order to better inform themselves about different sustainable options available for various aspects of their daily lives such as transportation and shopping habits.

# **Conclusion:**

By utilizing these strategies for encouraging sustainability among clients while ensuring their protection from potential risks associated with unsustainable practices, businesses not only benefit from increased customer satisfaction but also play an important role in preserving our planet for future

#### generations.

As the construction industry evolves, those within it need to prioritize sustainable practices. While initially, this goal may seem daunting, many strategies and materials can be employed to achieve success. Through education and dedication to sustainability, construction professionals can help support a areener future for all. To learn more about how you can make an impact, contact our experts.



# Lance Pizzariello MBC Group Director

Lance is a Certified Sustainability Practitioner and holds an MSc with an emphasis on Sustainability, Contaminated Site Assessment, Remediation, and Program Design & Implementation from Royal Roads University. He specializes in providing consulting services to municipal, provincial,

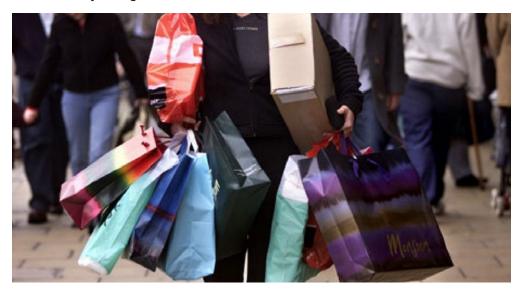
and federal government organizations, property management firms, developers, the insurance industry, as well as the natural resources sectors.



# Why Carrying Objects Can Pose a Risk When Responding to a Fall

#### By: Andrew Huntley B.Sc., Ph.D.

arrying an object while walking, whether a child or a cell phone, can greatly alter the outcome if we lose our balance. How many times have you attempted to carry all the groceries from the car in one trip, decided you can carry those extra bags for your vacation, or loaded yourself up with that one extra item in the house before you walked down some stairs? It's these actions that we all do on a regular basis that put us at an increased risk from effectively responding to a moment of imbalance by being able to brace for a fall.



A moment of imbalance can encompass several scenarios, often grouped into one of three categories: slips, trips, and missteps; all of which we have faced multiple times throughout our lives. Slips most often occur when we place our foot on the ground with insufficient friction while walking. Our foot slides forward and/or to the side, causing us to lose our balance and fall backwards or to the side. Trips most often occur when our leg swing is interrupted, preventing our foot from arriving where we need it. Trips occur under a variety of situations, from undetected elevation changes in the sidewalk on your evening walk or tripping over the family pet that just walked between your legs. Last, missteps are simply any step that is insufficiently placed to accept the weight transfer of your body, which can be especially important when that weight transfer also includes the things you are carrying.

With our hands full carrying loads like groceries, our injury risk may increase due to an increased inability to brace for a fall during moments of imbalance. By bracing for a fall, an individual has successfully moved their arm to grab onto a railing or contact the ground before the head or pelvis does, thus decreasing the impact force of that fall. Not bracing for a fall can lead to



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Toll Free: 1(888) 202-3923 Phone: (416) 266-1500 Fax: (905) 831-1115 Email: info@rapidcitytransport.com www.rapidcitytransport.com an increased risk of severe injury consequences. Research has shown that unbraced falls from standing height can lead to upwards of 300 g of acceleration impacting the head. As a comparison, a study looking at braced falls with the hands used at the last moment before impacting the ground found peak accelerations to the head of only 15.2 g. That's a 20x decrease in head impact by simply bracing at the last moment before contacting the ground! To give an idea on what that means for injuries (e.g., concussion), the average acceleration associated with concussion in professional football players was found to be only 98 g. This highlights just how important bracing becomes in reducing the forces the body experiences when falling.

For older adults, the risk of falling is an ever-present danger faced when going about the activities associated with daily living. The Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) reported seniors (individuals 65 and older) make up 71% of hospital stays due to unintentional falls, with hip fractures the most likely cause of hospitalization. While it is currently not known how much carrying loads played a role in these studied injuries and hospitalizations, research evidence suggests carrying loads or holding objects certainly plays a role. One study found that individuals exposed to a loss of balance while holding objects preferentially hang onto the object instead of protecting themselves, even when the object they are holding is not helpful in regaining their balance! Simply put, if you start to fall while texting and walking, you are more likely to protect your phone than your own body. It is scientific findings like these that should give us pause when we decide to routinely carry that extra item instead of keeping our hands free.

It should be noted that the potential risk posed by carrying loads when responding to moments of imbalance is not unique to seniors. That same CIHI report also stated that while most hospital stays due to unintentional falls may be seniors, individuals younger than 65 years of age make up 72% of emergency department visits due to unintentional falls. The difference in injury rates has to do with response-ability, as falls from standing height have enough impact energy to cause hip fractures in young adults, but young adults have an increased ability to rapidly place their hands in a position to brace for impact that results in staving off any major hip injuries.



Whether it be attempting to make just one trip from the car with your groceries, or carrying that extra item down the stairs so you don't have to make another trip, we should be thinking about what we are trying to accomplish - delivering of an item, posting on Instagram, or arriving safely. While we may often think about falls in terms of overall ability, age, or strength, we often don't consider the potential negative influence that carrying an object may have on our ability to brace for falls. At the end of the day, take that extra trip to the car, the extra trip up and down the stairs, or post your selfie while seated, because it may just be what helps prevent serious injury.

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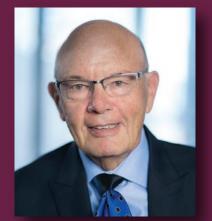
within the Biomechanics and Personal Injury Assessment group. He has published in some of the top biomechanics and human movement science journals and has taught courses in biomechanics and the neurophysiological control of movement at the University of Guelph and University of Toronto. He remains active in the research and teaching community, participating in

ongoing projects at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute examining the effectiveness of rehabilitative balance programs, and exploring handrail dimension impacts on graspability and effectiveness in preventing falls.

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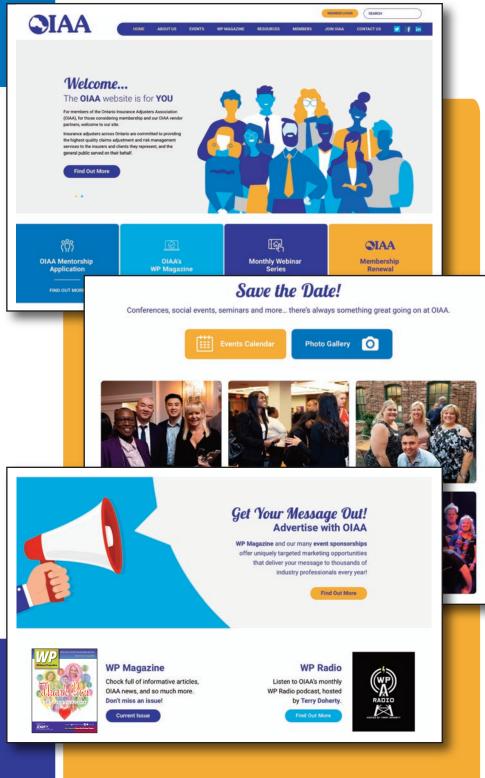
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# Real Estate Fraud and Title Insurance Claims

By: Geoffrey Keating, Partner, Kostyniuk & Greenside



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Title Insurance Policies can also protect the homeowner if unauthorized title documents or encum brances are registered on title to the real property.

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This generally occurs in three manners:

- 1. Fraudulent Transfer: Title is improperly transferred from the true property owner to a third party without the true owner's knowledge or consent
- 2. Mortgage Fraud: A Mortgage is registered against title to the property without the true homeowner's knowledge or consent and the true owner does not knowingly obtain the benefit of the mortgage loan proceeds.
- 3. Fraudulent Transfer and Mortgage: Title is improperly transferred plus the new titled owner obtains a mortgage loan.

Homeowners title insurance is customarily purchased at the time the property is purchased. However, for individuals who have owned their homes for a significant period of time, certain Title Insurers offer homeowners Title Insurance for purchase even many years after the home was originally purchased.



The homeowners Title Insurance Policy customarily operates to assist the homeowner to secure or obtain clear and valid title to the real property. If the homeowner's Title Insurance Policy is applicable, it could assist the homeowner to defend any mortgage enforcement or other type of proceeding by a lender where the homeowner alleges it had no knowledge of the transaction and did not knowingly receive the benefit of the mortgage loan proceeds. The Policy may also cover legal fees associated with a Land Titles proceeding seeking to have a fraudulent Transfer or Mortgage Instrument expunged from title to the real property.

Typically, the homeowner must also prove that he/she was not aware of, complicit in or knowingly obtained a benefit from the fraudulent transaction in order for the Title Insurance Policy to potentially respond.

## **Lender Title Policies:**

Lenders Title Insurance is also available to both institutional and private mortgage lenders. This is customarily purchased by the lender at the time the mortgage loan is advanced. This type of insurance customarily protects the lender in the event the mortgage is determined to be invalid or unenforceable. The lender policy normally provides coverage up to the amount of the mortgage and may afford coverage for interest.

One relatively recent exclusion from certain lenders' Title Insurance coverage, which has now been implemented by various Canadian Title Insurers, relates to the intended recipient of the loan proceeds. If the loan proceeds were not paid directly to the purported borrower/homeowner but were directed elsewhere, for example, to an individual to whom the purported homeowner allegedly owed funds, an exclusion to the lender's Title Insurance Policy may be applicable to negate the availability of insurance coverage in that instance.

# **Types of Real Estate Fraud:**

There are numerous ways in which real estate fraud is undertaken. The most prominent methods involve either:

## 1. Value Fraud

In a value fraud situation, a property is transferred to a "straw purchaser" (individual complicit in the fraud) at an inflated price primarily to allow the owner/borrower to arrange for increased mortgage financing. This situation may involve a borrower who cannot independently qualify for increased mortgage financing, and they arrange for someone to act as a co-owner or co-mortgagor, despite this individual not having any bona fide interest in the property. Another scenario involves transferring the property to a straw purchaser outright at an inflated purchase price, and then arranging for a new increased Mortgage to be registered on title.

# 2. Identity Fraud

In an identity fraud scenario, someone impersonating the homeowner may fraudulently execute a Transfer of the property to a third party. This new supposed owner then arranges for a new Mortgage and absconds with the funds. Alternatively, the impersonator may execute mortgage documents that impersonate the existing owner, without a Transfer of title. The true homeowner often has no idea of

the transfer of ownership and/or of the new mortgage and therefore continues to reside in the property, unaware of the situation, until they receive an Enforcement Notice from the new mortgage lender indicating the mortgage has gone into default.

# **Rental Properties:**

Rental properties are a large source of real estate and mortgage-fraud related transactions, as unscrupulous tenants can facilitate entry of an appraiser retained by a mortgage lender to undertake an appraisal of the value of the premises in advance of the lender agreeing to proceed with the loan. This also occurs with properties rented via sharing markets such as AirBnB or VRBO.

At times, the impersonator may be known to the true homeowner. This may include a matrimonial home situation where one spouse transfers and/or mortgages the property without the other the spouse's consent, a family member (i.e., grandchild transferring and arranges someone to impersonatean elderly grandparent), or a tenant of the true owner.

In many identity- fraud related matters, an impersonator gains

access to the homeowner's photo identification, personal information and real estate related paperwork (i.e., property tax and home insurance documents). They then arrange for a Transfer and/or Mortgage of the property without the true homeowner's consent. Individuals unknown to the property owner may arrange for the creation of fake identification that contains all or most of the homeowner's identifying information, with the exception of an authentic photograph and/or potentially the true homeowner's signature. This allows for the impersonator to attend at a lawyer's office with the falsified identification and to sign the Transfer and/or Mortgage documents purporting to

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#### be the true homeowner/borrower.

To our understanding, perpetrators have successfully used certain online credit bureau services customarily used by Landlords to vet prospective tenants, to access the personal information of prospective real estate fraud victims.

The restrictions of in person meetings due to the Covid-19 pandemic has also played into the hands of unscrupulous individuals, as client meetings and document execution has shifted to virtual practices, such as the use of DocuSign or similar virtual document signing tools. Virtual environments can facilitate fraudulent activity, especially if the lawyer does not physically see the individual affix their signature to the relevant documents.

## Investigation of Title Insurance Fraud Claims:

It should be noted that there may be two title Insurers involved – the homeowner's title Insurer as well as the title Insurer for the mortgage lender. Each title Insurer customarily retains their own insurance Adjuster or investigator and these individuals liaise in an effort to conduct joint interviews of relevant parties and individuals and, to the extent appropriate, share copies of relevant documents.

The investigation of Title Insurance fraud claims involves unravelling the chain of events that led to the transaction. This usually involves an extensive interview of the true homeowner to ascertain if they were involved in and/or complicit in the purported Transfer or Mortgage as well as how their relevant identification personal information and documentation may have come into the hands of others for use in the transaction(s).

If an appraisal of the home was conducted, which includes taking photographs of the interior of the home, one must investigate how and when the home was allegedly accessed without the knowledge of the true owner.

Interviews of lenders are also conducted to determine how they came to be involved in the transaction, who they met with and from whom they obtained relevant documents and information. Extensive real estate documentation both from the purchase and mortgage file is also reviewed to determine addresses from which communication was sent, assess signatures and trace where the loan or sale proceeds flowed.

The lawyers for both the lender and purported purchaser/borrower may be interviewed, along with any other individuals who provided services in relation to the suspect transaction. This can include Law Clerks, Paralegals, Appraisers, Real Estate Agents, Mortgage Brokers and Insurance Agents.

Professional Handwriting analysis may, at times, be secured by either the title Insurer for the homeowner and/or mortgage lender or both title Insurers. While this can address whether the homeowner/alleged borrower executed the Transfer or Mortgage loan documentation, it does not address a situation where the homeowner was complicit in arranging for others to execute the documentation, even if they did not do so themselves. Also, the unscrupulous individuals may have digitally cut and pasted the true owner's signature from their true identification onto the real estate documents. This results in a situation where the true signature of the true homeowner is affixed to the documents, but the true homeowner did not affix same and was not aware of the transaction.

It is often also helpful to liaise with the police if they are investigating the matter.

## **Conclusion:**

Real Estate related frauds are on the rise and involve a detailed investigation by qualified professionals. Crawford & Company's Global Technical Services' group of seasoned adjusters are well versed in these type of multifaceted investigations and can assist in the adjustment of these complex losses.



#### Randy Novick, B.Comm, LLB

Randy is an Executive General Adjuster with Crawford & Company's Global Technical Services. She has extensive experience investigating various types of specialty claims including real estate and mortgage fraud, professional liability, directors and officers liability , cyber related crimes, media and entertainment related disputes and sexual abuse.

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