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June 14 2010

THOMPSON'S WORLD INSURANCE NEWS

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Flooding in Winnipeg:

Emergency claim office set up

FLOODED basements have kept adjusters hopping in Winnipeg since torrential rains earlier this month.

Walter Waugh, western vp operations for Crawford & Co., said the Winnipeg office has added three adjusters to its normal complement of eight, and branch manager Randy LaBrash told *Thompson's* they have answered almost 300 calls so far.

Even Kernaghan Adjusters, which has a relatively small presence in Winnipeg, has fielded about 100 calls, said regional manager Grant Rerie.

He said media had reported about 600 flooded basements in the Winnipeg area, of which he estimated 200 were actual sewer backup and 400 were weeping tile water — which is still classified as sewer back-up for insurance purposes.

“I would say the majority of it is injured,” he said. “With most companies the (minimum) limit is \$5,000 with additional coverage available in \$5,000 increments.”

He said the damage is due in part to Winnipeg's building code, which bans draining weeping tiles into city sewers.

“Winnipeg's sewer system is a fairly antiquated system through a good part of the city, so in order to take the pressure off the sewer systems they . . . sort of take that weeping tile water out of the scenario altogether.”

The tiles drain into the home's sump pit.

“And then you're relying on a mechanical device to get rid of it,” he said. “And these pumps are notorious for failing.”

The provincial Emergency Measures Organization has set up a mobile office in suburban Emerson to accept disaster financial assistance applications from flooded-out homeowners.

The DFA program pays homeowners up to \$200,000 for damage caused by overland flooding. It does not pay for damage caused by sewer back-up.