



# Homeowners Comparison Guide

## Introduction

Homeowners insurance protects you from financial losses caused by storms, fire, theft, and other events outlined in the policy. South Carolina law does not require you to purchase homeowners insurance, but your lender may require you to have insurance if you are financing your home.

## Understanding Rates

Insurance companies base your premium on factors such as the replacement cost of your home, its construction materials, the area where you live, your claims history, your credit score, and local fire protection class code.

## How to Use the Price Comparisons

This guide can help you compare price estimates among companies that sell homeowners insurance to consumers in South Carolina. The table lists companies estimates for homeowners with an HO3 (standard homeowner's policy) policy or equivalent with full replacement cost. The comparison is for \$150,000 coverage on the house and \$500 deductible (or a hurricane deductible for coastal counties of 2% rather than the flat \$500). The prices shown are estimates given to the South Carolina Department of Insurance (SCDOI) by the companies and are based on a limited set of criteria. They are not the exact amounts you may be quoted. Your premium will vary according to your individual circumstances and may be higher than the estimates listed.

### Before You Buy a Policy, Remember:

- In addition to cost, consider other factors, such as the company's financial strength and complaint history.
- Coverages and limits can vary from policy to policy. Ask the agent or company for the exact coverages in the policy you are considering. Choose a policy with the coverages you need and with adequate limits to replace your house and property if they are destroyed. The amount of coverage you buy should be based on your home's replacement (rebuilding) cost, which may be different from its market value.
- Don't cancel a policy until you have a new policy in effect.
- Answer all questions on the application truthfully. Wrong information could result in an incorrect price quote or a denial or cancellation of coverage.

### Policy Type

Companies can sell several types of policies, each with a different level of coverage. Make sure you discuss with the agent or company the options available to determine the policy that best fits your needs. The price estimates listed are for a typical HO3 policy. The estimates shown are representative prices by region.

## How to Find the Best Rate

- Get quotes from several companies before you buy. Include independent agents in your search. Some agents only represent a single company or company group. Independent agents may represent several companies.
- Consider higher deductibles. You can save money on your premiums by increasing your policy deductibles, but you will have to pay more out-of-pocket if you have a claim. You will need to have money readily available (personal savings, ability to borrow from relatives or friends, etc.) to pay your out-of-pocket share of the loss.
- Ask your agent about discounts. Discounts vary by company. Some companies may offer discounts if you have multiple policies with the company, an impact-resistant roof, security or fire sprinkler system, a newer home, or a good claims history. Other discounts may be available.

### A.M. Best Rating

The South Carolina Department of Insurance requires companies to meet certain minimum financial requirements in order to be licensed to do business in South Carolina. The Department does not, however, provide ratings on companies. A.M. Best rates companies based upon the financial strength and operating performance of each company. Best's ratings are subject to change and are current only as of the publication date. For current rating information, call A.M. Best at 1-908-439-2200 or visit its website at [www.ambest.com](http://www.ambest.com).

### Unfair Discrimination

An insurance company cannot deny, refuse to renew, limit or charge more for coverage, or unfairly discriminate because of your race, color, religion, or national origin. A company also may not discriminate because of your age, gender, marital status, geographic location, or disability or partial disability, unless the refusal, limitation, or higher rate is based on sound underwriting or actuarial principles. This means the company must have valid evidence that you present a greater risk for a loss than homeowners it is willing to insure. Companies may deny coverage because of the condition of the dwelling, including the plumbing, wiring, and heating and air conditioning systems.

### **Having Trouble Finding Insurance?**

Don't give up if a company turns you down. Continue to talk with agents in your area who represent other companies. If you are still unsuccessful in finding homeowners insurance, visit [www.doi.sc.gov/consumer](http://www.doi.sc.gov/consumer) or call our Consumer Services Division, a free service of the South Carolina Department of Insurance.

### **For More Information or Assistance**

For answers to general insurance questions or for information on filing an insurance-related complaint, visit our website or call the Consumer Services Division.

### **Having Trouble Finding Insurance?**

Don't give up if a company turns you down. Continue to talk with agents in your area who represent other companies. If you are still unsuccessful in finding homeowners insurance, visit [www.doi.sc.gov/consumer/](http://www.doi.sc.gov/consumer/) or call our Consumer Services Division, a free service of the South Carolina Department of Insurance.

### **For More Information or Assistance**

For answers to general insurance questions or for information on filing an insurance-related complaint, visit our website or call the Consumer Services Division.



South Carolina  
Department of Insurance  
1201 Main Street, Suite 1000  
P. O. Box 100105 (29202)  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
803-737-6180  
800-768-3467  
(Toll Free Only in SC) 803-737-6231 - fax  
[www.doi.sc.gov](http://www.doi.sc.gov)  
Consumer Services Division  
Monday through Friday  
8:30a.m. to 5:00p.m.

- The information in this publication is current as of the revision date. Changes in laws and regulations made after the revision date may affect the content. View current information on our website. The South Carolina Department of Insurance distributes this publication for educational purposes only. This publication is not an endorsement by the South Carolina Department of Insurance of any service, product, or company.
- A.M. Best Co. is not responsible for errors in presentation or content and does not endorse this publication in any way.