

Regulators OK 2% insurance surcharge

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Floridians with homeowners' commercial and liability insurance will pay a 2 percent surcharge to cover four companies that failed due to the 2004-2005 hurricane seasons.

The surcharge, approved Monday by Insurance Commissioner Kevin McCarty and earlier this month by the board of the Florida Insurance Guaranty Association, will help cover claims against Tampa-based Poe Financial Group's three insurers - Atlantic Preferred, Florida Preferred and Southern Family Insurance companies - and a smaller insurer, Vanguard Fire & Casualty Co., said Michelle Lovern, FIGA deputy director.

Poe Financial filed Chapter 11 in August 2006 and Vanguard was ordered into liquidation in March 2007.

Lovern said FIGA expects to collect \$340 million to cover those companies' costs.

It's the third assessment in 15 months. Policies under the state-run Citizen Property Insurance Corp. will be hit for the first time since it lost its exemption from the assessments in January. The surcharge also applies to medical malpractice and aircraft policies.

The one-time assessment is expected to begin appearing on customers bill in March 2008.