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Title 44 - Emergency Management and Assistance

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§ 62.23 WYO Companies authorized.

(a) Pursuant to section 1345 of the Act, the Administrator may enter into arrangements with individual private sector property insurance companies or other insurers, such as public entity risk sharing organizations. Under these arrangements, such companies or other insurers may offer flood insurance coverage under the program to eligible applicants. Such WYO companies may offer flood coverage to policyholders insured by them under their own property business lines of insurance, pursuant to their customary business practices, including their usual arrangements with agents and producers. WYO companies may sell flood insurance coverage in any State in which the WYO company is authorized to engage in the business of property insurance. Other WYO insurers may offer flood insurance coverage to their pool members insured by them under their own property business lines of coverage, pursuant to their customary business practices. These other WYO insurers may provide flood coverage in any State that has authorized the other insurer to provide property coverage to its members. Arrangements entered into by WYO Companies or other insurers under this subpart must be in the form and substance of the standard arrangement, titled “Financial Assistance/Subsidy Arrangement,” a copy of which is included in appendix A of this part and made a part of these regulations.

(b) Any duly authorized insurer so engaged in the Program shall be a WYO Company. (The term “WYO Company” shall include the following kinds of insurers: Public entity risk-sharing organizations, an association of local governments, a State association of political subdivisions, a State-sponsored municipal league, and other intergovernmental risk-sharing pool for covering public entity structures.)

(c) A WYO Company is authorized to arrange for the issuance of flood insurance in any amount within the maximum limits of coverage specified in §61.6 of this subchapter, as Insurer, to any person qualifying for such coverage under parts 61 and 64 of this subchapter who submits an application to the WYO Company; coverage shall be issued under the Standard Flood Insurance Policy.

(d) A WYO Company issuing flood insurance coverage shall arrange for the adjustment, settlement, payment and defense of all claims arising from policies of flood insurance it issues under the Program, based upon the terms and conditions of the Standard Flood Insurance Policy.

(e) In carrying out its functions under this subpart, a WYO Company shall use its own customary standards, staff and independent contractor resources, as it would in the ordinary and necessary conduct of its own business affairs, subject to the Act and regulations prescribed by the Administrator under the Act.

(f) To facilitate the marketing of flood insurance coverage under the Program to policyholders of WYO Companies, the Administrator will enter into arrangements with such companies whereby the Federal Government will be a guarantor in which the primary relationship between the WYO Company and the Federal Government will be one of a fiduciary nature, i.e., to assure that any taxpayer funds are accounted for and appropriately expended. In furtherance of this end, the Administrator has established "A Plan to Maintain Financial Control for Business Written Under the Write Your Own Program", a copy of which is included in appendix B of this part and made a part of these regulations.

(g) A WYO Company shall act as a fiscal agent of the Federal Government, but not as its general agent. WYO Companies are solely responsible for their obligations to their insured under any flood insurance policies issued under agreements entered into with the Administrator, such that the Federal Government is not a proper party defendant in any lawsuit arising out of such policies.

(h) To facilitate the underwriting of flood insurance coverage by WYO Companies, the following procedures will be used by WYO Companies:

(1) To expedite business growth, the WYO Company will encourage its present property insurance policyholders to purchase flood insurance through the NFIP WYO Program.

(2) To conform its underwriting practices to the underwriting rules and rates in effect as to the NFIP, the WYO Company will establish procedures to carry out the NFIP rating system and provide its policyholders with the same coverage as is afforded under the NFIP.

(3) The WYO Company may follow its customary billing practices to meet the Federal rules on the presentment of premium and net premium deposits to a Letter of Credit bank account authorized by the Administrator and reduction of coverage when an underpayment is discovered.

(4) The WYO Company is expected to meet the recording and reporting requirements of the WYO Transaction Record Reporting and Processing Plan. Transactions reported by the WYO Company under the WYO Transaction Record Reporting and Processing Plan will be analyzed by the NFIP Bureau & Statistical Agent. A monthly report will be submitted to the WYO Company and the FIA. The analysis will cover the timeliness of WYO Company submissions, the disposition of transactions that have not passed systems edits and the reconciliation of the totals generated from transaction reports with those submitted on the WYO Company's reconciliation reports.

(5) If a WYO Company rejects an application from an agent or a producer, the agent or producer shall be notified so that the business can be placed through the NFIP Servicing Agent, or another WYO Company.

(6) Flood insurance coverage will be issued by the WYO Company on a separate policy form and will not be added, by endorsement, to the Company's other property insurance forms.

(7) Premium payment plans can be offered by the WYO Company so long as the net premium depository requirements specified under the NFIP/WYO Program accounting procedures are met. A cancellation by the WYO Company for non-payment of premium will not produce a pro rata return of the net premium deposit to the WYO Company.

(8) NFIP business will not be assumed by the WYO Companies at any time other than at renewal time, at which time the insurance producer may submit the business to the WYO Company as new business. However, it is permissible to cancel and rewrite flood policies to obtain concurrent expiration dates with other policies covering the property.

(i) To facilitate the adjustment of flood insurance claims by WYO Companies, the following procedures will be used by WYO Companies.

(1) Under the terms of the Arrangement set forth at appendix A of this part, WYO Companies will adjust claims in accordance with general Company standards, guided by NFIP Claims manuals. The Arrangement also provides that claim adjustments shall be binding upon the FIA. For example, the entire responsibility for providing a proper adjustment for both combined wind and water claims and flood-alone claims is the responsibility of the WYO Company. The responsibility for providing a proper adjustment for combined wind and water claims is to be conducted by listing in concert with the Single Adjuster provisions listed in appendix A.

(2) The WYO Company may use its staff adjusters, independent adjusters, or both. It is important that the Company's Claims Department verifies the correctness of the coverage interpretations and reasonableness of the payments recommended by the adjusters.

(3) An established loss adjustment Fee Schedule is part of the Arrangement and cannot be changed during an Arrangement year. This is the expense allowance to cover costs of independent or WYO Company adjusters.

(4) The normal catastrophe claims procedure currently operated by a WYO Company should be implemented in the event of a claim catastrophe situation. Flood claims will be handled along with other catastrophe claims.

(5) It will be the WYO Company's responsibility to try to detect fraud (as it does in the case of property insurance) and coordinate its findings with FIA.

(6) Pursuant to the Arrangement, the responsibility for defending claims will be upon the Write Your Own Company and defense costs will be part of the unallocated or allocated claim expense allowance, depending on whether a staff counsel or an outside attorney handles the defense of the matter. Claims in litigation will be reported by WYO Companies to FIA upon joinder of issue and FIA may inquire and be advised of the disposition of such litigation.

(7) The claim reserving procedures of the individual WYO Company can be used.

(8) Regarding the handling of subrogation, if a WYO Company prefers to forego pursuit of subrogation recovery, it may do so by referring the matter, with a complete copy of the claim file, to FIA. Subrogation initiatives may be truncated at any time before suit is commenced (after commencing an action, special arrangement must be made). FIA, after consultation with FEMA's Office of the General Counsel (OGC), will forward the cause of action to OGC or to the NFIP Bureau and Statistical Agent for prosecution. Any funds received will be deposited, less expenses, in the National Flood Insurance Fund.

(9) Special allocated loss adjustment expenses will include such items as: nonstaff attorney fees, engineering fees and special investigation fees over and above normal adjustment practices.

(10) The customary content of claim files will include coverage verification, normal adjuster investigations, including statements where necessary, police reports, building reports and investigations, damage verification and other documentation relevant to the adjustment of claims under the NFIP's and the WYO Company's traditional claim adjustment practices and procedures. The WYO Company's claim examiners and managers will supervise the adjustment of flood insurance claims by staff and independent claims adjusters.

(11) The WYO Company will extend reasonable cooperation to FEMA's Office of the General Counsel on matters pertaining to litigation and subrogation, under paragraph (i) (8) of this section.

(j) To facilitate establishment of financial controls under the WYO Program, the WYO Company will:

(1) Have a biennial audit of the flood insurance financial statements conducted by an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) firm at the Company's expense to ensure that the financial data reported to us accurately represents the flood insurance activities of the Company. The CPA firm must conduct its audits in accordance with the generally accepted auditing standards (GAAS) and Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (commonly known as "yellow book" requirements). The Company must file with us (the Federal Insurance Administration) a report of the CPA firm's detailed biennial audit, and, after our review of the audit report, we will convey our determination to the Standards Committee.

(2) Participate in a WYO Company/FIA Operation review. We will conduct a review of the WYO Company's flood insurance claims, underwriting, customer service, marketing, and litigation activities at least once every three (3) years. As part of these reviews, we will reconcile specific files with a listing of transactions submitted by the Company under the Transaction Record Reporting and Processing (TRPP) Plan (Part 5). We will file a report of the Operation Review with the Standards Committee.

(3) Meet the recording and reporting requirements of the WYO Transaction Record Reporting and Processing Plan and the WYO Accounting Procedures Manual. Transactions reported to the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP's) Bureau and Statistical Agent by the WYO Company under the WYO Transaction Record Reporting and Processing Plan and the WYO Accounting Procedures Manual will be analyzed by the Bureau and Statistical Agent and a monthly report will be submitted to the WYO Company and the FIA. The analysis will cover the timeliness of the WYO Company submissions, the disposition of transactions which do not pass systems edits and the reconciliation of the totals generated from transaction reports with those submitted on WYO Company reconciliation reports.

(4) Cooperate with FEMA's Office of Financial Management on Letter of Credit matters.

(5) Cooperate with FIA in the implementation of a claims reinspection program.

(6) Cooperate with FIA in the verification of risk rating information.

(7) Cooperate with FEMA's Office of the Inspector General on matters pertaining to fraud.

(k) To facilitate the operation of the WYO Program and in order that a WYO Company can use its own customary standards, staff and independent contractor resources, as it would in the ordinary and necessary conduct of its own business affairs, subject to the Act, the Administrator, for good cause shown, may grant exceptions to and waivers of the regulations contained in this title relative to the administration of the NFIP.

(l)(1) WYO Companies may, on a voluntary basis, elect to participate in the Mortgage Portfolio Protection Program (MPPP), under which they can offer, as a last resort, flood insurance at special high rates, sufficient to recover the full cost of this program in recognition of the uncertainty as to the degree of risk a given building presents due to the limited underwriting data required, to properties in a lending institution's mortgage portfolio to achieve compliance with the flood insurance purchase requirements of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973. Flood insurance policies under the MPPP may only be issued for those properties that:

(i) Are determined to be located within special flood hazard areas of communities that are participating in the NFIP, and

(ii) Are not covered by a flood insurance policy even after a required series of notices have been given to the property owner (mortgagor) by the lending institution of the requirement for obtaining and maintaining such coverage, but the mortgagor has failed to respond.

(2) WYO Companies participating in the MPPP must provide a detailed implementation package to any lending institution that, on a voluntary basis, chooses to participate in the MPPP to ensure the lending institution has full knowledge of the criteria in that program and must obtain a signed receipt for that package from the lending institution. Participating WYO Companies must also maintain evidence of compliance with paragraph (l)(3) of this section for review during the audits and reviews required by the WYO

Financial Control Plan contained in appendix B of this part.

(3) The mortgagor must be protected against the lending institution's arbitrary placing of flood insurance for which the mortgagor will be billed by being sent three notification letters as described in paragraphs (l)(4) through (6) of this section.

(4) The initial notification letter must:

(i) State the requirements of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended;

(ii) Announce the determination that the mortgagor's property is in an identified special flood hazard area as delineated on the appropriate FEMA map, necessitating flood insurance coverage for the duration of the loan;

(iii) Describe the procedure to follow should the mortgagor wish to challenge the determination;

(iv) Request evidence of a valid flood insurance policy or, if there is none, encourage the mortgagor to obtain a Standard Flood Insurance Policy (SFIP) promptly from a local insurance agent (or WYO Company);

(v) Advise that the premium for a MPPP policy is significantly higher than a conventional SFIP policy and advise as to the option for obtaining less costly flood insurance; and

(vi) Advise that a MPPP policy will be purchased by the lender if evidence of flood insurance coverage is not received by a date certain.

(5) The second notification letter must remind the mortgagor of the previous notice and provide essentially the same information.

(6) The final notification letter must:

(i) Enclose a copy of the flood insurance policy purchased under the MPPP on the mortgagor's (insured's) behalf, together with the Declarations Page,

(ii) Advise that the policy was purchased because of the failure to respond to the previous notices, and

(iii) Remind the insured that similar coverage may be available at significantly lower cost and advise that the policy can be cancelled at any time during the policy year and a pro rata refund provided for the unearned portion of the premium in the event the insured purchases another policy that is acceptable to satisfy the requirements of the 1973 Act.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under OMB control number 3067-0229)

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