

## **PROTECTING YOUR PROPERTY - RENTERS INSURANCE**

Service members renting homes off-base typically purchase the amount of renters insurance coverage necessary to cover the value of their personal effects. Residents of public/private venture (PPV) housing mistakenly believe that they are provided full insurance coverage from the Government. That is not the case.

Until recently, those residing in PPV housing were provided limited insurance coverage under the terms of the rental agreement – generally \$10,000 to \$20,000. However, due to a variety of factors, DoD no longer requires PPV housing companies to provide renters insurance.

- Although some long-term residents may be grandfathered in, most residents will no longer have any insurance coverage automatically provided. Check with your local housing office to determine if you are covered.

Active duty residents of PPV housing located inside the perimeter of the fence-line of a restricted access military installation may be entitled to compensation for damage or loss of their personal property under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act (PCA).

- The PCA allows for limited compensation for active duty service members whose personal property is lost, damaged or destroyed incident to their military service.
- Under the PCA, claimants are required to first file a claim with their insurance carrier, and the Government can only consider what is not covered by private insurance. Additionally, claimants will only receive the fair market (depreciated) value at the time of loss of their lost or damaged property.

The limitations on PCA payments mean that service members residing in PPV housing may not be fully covered for losses. **The best way for residents of PPV housing to protect their personal property is through personally-acquired renters insurance.** Some basic tips include:

- Take an inventory. Before purchasing insurance itemize your belongings with price estimates, serial numbers, receipts (if possible), and purchase dates. Taking photos or videos of your home's contents can be useful. If you have a high value item (jewelry, an antique, art work, etc.), you may also need an appraisal.

- Make an informed decision. Ask your insurance company about theft limits, cash or replacement value, deductible options, and discounts.
- Shop around. Call a variety of insurance agents, and keep track of the coverage and costs.
- Read the policy: It's a contract; ensure you understand your and the insurance company's obligations. Consider making an appointment with your local military legal assistance office to discuss the policy terms and conditions before you buy the policy.