

# Public Adjuster: This is Not Your Government Representative

by [Yvonne R. Hunter](#) | May 17, 2017



*This is the first of a two-part blog dealing with consumer insurance issues and public adjusters. The information and issues raised are based on the personal opinion of the author. Readers are*

*encouraged to present any questions about their own situation to their state department of insurance, insurance commissioner, or seek advice from an attorney.*

## Part I

A recent Arizona court decision dealing with the 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire and property owners seeking help from residential insurance carriers may prompt questions about residential insurance and how to process a claim. The role of a public adjuster raised many questions in court proceedings in which property owners sought relief from insurance carriers and the state of Arizona. Consumers and businesses with property and casualty insurance policies may ask about the role of a public adjuster and whether a public adjuster is necessary to help manage an insurance claim.

What is a public insurance adjuster?

In most states, public insurance adjusters are required to be [licensed](#). For those states that require licensing, a property owner can check with the state insurance director or commissioner to confirm that the public insurance adjuster is licensed and in good standing in your state.

For example, Arizona requires public adjusters to be [registered/licensed](#) and will impose sanctions against those who fail to register.

Arizona law defines a public adjuster as “a person hired to adjust, investigate or negotiate insurance claim settlements on behalf of the insured.” ([ARS § 20-321](#)) The National Association of Public Insurance Adjusters [describes](#) a public insurance adjuster as “an authority on loss adjustments who you can retain to assist you in preparing, filing, and adjusting your insurance claims.”

When would an insured party benefit from the services of a public insurance adjuster? The following provides some reasons for using a public adjuster

- The property destroyed is unique or there is limited information available to support the claim;
- The property owner has limited capability for managing the day-to-day challenges of gathering the relevant information in support of the claim;
- The nature of the loss is complex, involving factors that require extensive research or coordination with third parties.

Once a person decides that a public adjuster is necessary, the next part of this article identifies some things to consider before hiring the public adjuster.