

Navigating the rising tide of catastrophes– Understanding your binding authority

As climate change intensifies, Canada is experiencing a surge in catastrophic events, profoundly affecting personal and commercial insurance landscapes. The onset of these significant climate-related events is happening earlier and now hitting Canadians harder and more frequently.

In 2024, severe weather caused over \$8 billion in insured losses. Over five years, insured losses for homes, businesses, and vehicles doubled from \$10 billion to a staggering \$20 billion. Understanding your broker binding authority during these events is crucial to ensure preparedness.

As a reminder, we've outlined your broker binding authority in catastrophic events below. Please review and contact us with any questions.

Binding authority protocols during catastrophic events

During imminent threats or active catastrophic events, binding authority is temporarily suspended under specific conditions. These circumstances and the types of transactions impacted are described in detail below.

1. **Areas under civil authority restrictions:**

When evacuation alerts or orders are issued by governing bodies (e.g., Environment Canada, Conservation Authority, Ministry of Forests, Municipality) due to major weather events such as tornadoes, hurricanes, hail, or landslides. The binding authority will be suspended until advisories, warnings or evacuation alerts are lifted or orders are rescinded.

2. **Flooding:**

In areas or waterways where flooding is occurring, evacuation alerts/orders are in place, or flood risks are announced by authorities. (e.g., Environment Canada, Conservation Authority, Municipality).

3. **Wildfire:**

Within 50 km of active wildfires deemed risks to property or public safety, or when evacuation alerts/orders are issued by authorities (e.g., Conservation Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources). This includes requests for coverage increases on existing risks. For current wildfire information, please refer to bcwildfire.ca.

4. **Earthquake:**

Risks located within 100 km of an earthquake epicenter measuring 5.0 or more on the Richter Scale. The binding authority suspension continues for 10 days post-earthquake.

Affected transactions during suspension:

- Binding existing quotes or providing new quotes.
- Writing new business or adding new locations, including substitutions.
- Increasing coverage limits or adding new coverage to existing policies.

Resources and support:

- Personal Lines Underwriting Guidelines: For comprehensive details, refer to the underwriting manual available on [GoBroker](#). These guidelines are for Personal Lines only.
- For Claims Assistance: Our Claims Mobile Response Team is ready to assist customers during catastrophic events. Customers can reach Claims Advisors at 1-844-974-GORE (4673).

Staying informed:

We encourage you and your clients to stay up to date by following local advisories and warnings. For the latest information on severe weather events, visit official government websites for [British Columbia](#), [Alberta](#), and [Ontario](#). Additional resources are available through the [Insurance Bureau of Canada](#).

The increasing frequency and severity of climate-related events require a proactive approach to risk management and practice. By adhering to binding authority protocols and staying informed, together we can better navigate the challenges posed by these catastrophic events and continue to support customers when they need it the most.

For any inquiries, please contact us at 1-844-974-GORE (4673).