

Surviving a Home Insurance Non-Renewal in California

A 30-day action plan to keep your home covered after the letter arrives.

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You are not alone — and you have time

If you opened a non-renewal letter from your homeowners insurance carrier, here are the two things that matter most right now:

1. California requires 75 days of advance notice before coverage actually ends. The letter is not the end — it's the start of a window.
2. You will find replacement coverage. California built a backstop for exactly this situation: the FAIR Plan, paired with a DIC wraparound, can keep you fully insured.

The most common mistake is panicking and accepting the first quote you find. The second most common is doing nothing until the deadline and getting force-placed by your mortgage lender at 2-3x the rate.

This is the structured plan that has worked for 1,000+ CoverToday clients across California.

Days 1-7: Confirm the timeline and gather your documents

- Find the effective end date on your non-renewal letter — it must be at least 75 days from the postmark
- Mark the date on your calendar as a hard deadline
- Pull these documents (you'll need them to shop):
 - Current declarations page (front page of your existing policy)
 - Mortgage statement (your lender will need proof of replacement coverage)
 - Photos or a recent inventory of the home interior
 - Wildfire-mitigation receipts:
 - Class A roof installation
 - Defensible space work (5 feet from house, 30 feet, 100 feet)
 - Ember-resistant vents
 - Hardened gutters
 - Tempered or dual-pane windows
- If you have a CalFire Defensible Space Inspection certificate, save a copy
- Note the claim history for your home over the past 5 years

Days 8-14: Shop the standard market first

Even in fire-zone ZIPs, some standard carriers will still write. Your broker should quote across at least:

- Mercury Insurance (fire-zone friendly in many California ZIPs)
- AAA / California Casualty / Pacific Specialty
- Stillwater
- Bamboo Insurance
- Several E&S; (excess & surplus) carriers — Lloyd's syndicates that move in and out of California

A competent independent broker like CoverToday can shop 10+ markets in a single quote intake. You should hear back within 24-48 hours whether a standard carrier will write you.

If yes, that quote is always cheaper than the FAIR Plan + DIC route. Bind it.

If no, proceed to step 3.

Days 15-25: Apply to the California FAIR Plan + DIC

The FAIR Plan is California's "insurer of last resort" — a state-mandated pool funded by every admitted carrier in California. It exists for exactly this situation.

What FAIR Plan covers:

- Fire and lightning
- Smoke damage
- Wind, hail, explosion (limited)
- Aircraft, vehicle, riot, vandalism (limited)
- Internal water damage from fire-fighting

What FAIR Plan does NOT cover:

- Liability (third-party injury or property damage)
- Theft
- Most water damage (broken pipes, etc.)
- Falling objects, weight of ice/snow
- Personal belongings beyond a basic limit

That's where the DIC (Difference In Conditions) policy comes in — a separate policy from a private carrier that covers everything FAIR Plan doesn't, "wrapping around" it.

FAIR Plan + DIC together = full HO-3 equivalent coverage.

Premium typically runs 30-60% higher than what you used to pay, but it is real coverage with real claims-paying ability.

To apply, your broker submits a FAIR Plan application with:

- Your address (must be confirmed FAIR Plan eligible)
- Coverage amounts (dwelling, contents, additional structures, loss of use)
- Wildfire-mitigation evidence (this can lower the premium)

Days 26-30: Bind, notify your lender, lock the renewal calendar

- Once you accept a quote, your broker binds the policy immediately
- Get the declarations page within 24 hours of binding
- Email or fax the declarations page to your mortgage lender the same day
 - This is critical to prevent force-placed insurance — coverage your lender buys for you that costs 2-3x more and only protects them, not your contents
- Set a calendar reminder for 60 days before each renewal to re-shop. Standard carriers do come back to the California market when reinsurance softens — your broker should move you off FAIR Plan the moment a standard option appears
- If you do additional wildfire mitigation in the meantime, send the receipts to your broker — many FAIR Plan and DIC carriers offer 10-20% discounts for it

What if I miss the 75-day window?

Don't panic. Even if your lender has already force-placed coverage:

1. Call a broker the same day
2. The FAIR Plan can typically bind within 24-48 hours
3. Once you have a real policy bound, send proof to the lender
4. Force-placed coverage usually unwinds within 30 days of receiving valid proof
5. Some states require lenders to refund the unused force-placed premium — California does in many cases

Talk to a California broker who handles fire-zone homes daily

CoverToday Insurance Agency has placed FAIR Plan + DIC packages for clients across California fire-zone ZIPs since 2016. Bilingual service in English and Russian. Same-day quote turnaround in most cases.

To start: Call or text 310-299-5555 with your address. We typically tell you within an hour whether a standard carrier will write you. If not, we can have a FAIR Plan + DIC quote bound within 24-48 hours.

Or email info@CoverToday.com.

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