

VAMA = (↓ALAE) + (↓APC)

By Jerry Provencher, President and Executive General Adjuster of Property Loss Consulting, Inc.

Means what? Being a third generation loss man with 27 years in the business, I had come to believe the old adage that there is nothing new under the sun. As it turns out, innovations in technology, coupled with old-time street adjusting skills, have resulted in exciting new opportunities to reduce costs and enhance adjusting results.

VAMA, acronym for Very Aggressive Mitigation Adjustment, is a web-based process for getting skilled adjusters immediate access to damaged homes, facilitating immediate drying, cleaning and mitigation of damage. Streaming video, digital photographs, diagrams, all necessary authorizations, interactive development of an initial scope of mitigation and repair, and a well disciplined approach to loss measurement and documentation bring the insured, a pre-screened mitigation contractor, and the adjuster together without the normal delays of conflicting schedules and windshield time.

While not appropriate for every loss, a significant percentage of common homeowner claims can be expedited with vastly improved customer service, reduced loss adjustment expense and significantly reduced average paid claim. The Virtual Adjusting side of this technology does have universal applicability, though. Every experienced field adjuster recognizes the value of a well-placed phone call, a timely faxed document, and the speed of digital photos through e-mail. The IMACCTM claim-CamTM technology, is yet another powerful tool for the savvy field adjuster. Not every transaction of a field-adjusted loss is conducted face-to-face. We simply must use the available communication tools to deliver the kinds of efficiencies insurers are demanding. If we can only deliver value in face-to-face meetings and inspections or re-inspections, we price ourselves out of the market. Effective use of this new technology as a loss management tool, combined with truly aggressive immediate mitigation can deliver huge savings to insurers in both indemnity as well as loss adjustment expense.

The reduction in claim costs was dramatically demonstrated in a recent “test burn” I attended at the Dri-Eaz facility in Nashville, TN. The IMACCTM network, Belfor USA and Dri-Eaz combined forces to demonstrate the effectiveness of immediate mitigation. A three bedroom model home was used to set a kitchen fire using plastics, various types of wood, paper, food products, and cooking grease. The fire was allowed to burn in the kettle grill (Keeping in mind we didn’t want to burn the building down!) for over 20 minutes. Extinguished once the hardwood floor and near-by kitchen cabinet were scorched, the home nevertheless suffered damage from heavy black smoke, steam, water, and excessive humidity. The walls were dark with soot, the furnishings and appliances were covered with wet, acidic smoke and combustion residues.

With immediate water extraction, dehumidification and cleaning, the amount of damage sustained was a fraction of what I estimated would be expected. With the exception of actual burn damage, *everything* was quickly restored. There was no damage to the new refrigerator or stove, even though these items are routinely tossed in the dumpster when

exposed to hot, wet smoke for even three or four days following the fire. Just 24 hours later, the home was clean, it did not smell like smoke and any homeowner would be astounded to see what can be done to save their property. The homeowner would have returned to the house several weeks earlier than normally expected. No building ever suffered from being dried and cleaned too quickly. The opposite certainly cannot be said.

But the question for claims professionals is how to accomplish the rapid restoration of a damaged building given the demands of file documentation and adjustment constraints. Now, the ClaimCam™ process and technology align file adjustment and documentation requirements with the real world demands of rapid restoration of damage. As an adjuster, I simply cannot arrive at every loss as quickly as the contractor, or camp at the loss location during this intense mitigation process. At the same time, I can't imagine telling even the most trusted contractor, "Just do whatever you think should be done and send me the bill." IMACC™ ClaimCam™ brings street-savvy adjusters, trained in drying and remediation to bear on damage claims in real time using a web-based technology so that no work or process, no matter how small compared to the overall loss, escapes the adjuster's review and approval process. At the same time, file documentation consistently exceeds current expectations and standards every time.

Interested? To learn more call David Kurland or Jerry Provencher directly at 410-528-1723.