

OCTOBER 21, 2020

# Transforming the Commercial Property Experience



Billion dollar weather events are becoming the norm in the U.S. Artemis cites a recent Aon report that industry losses from U.S. severe convective storms—fierce thunderstorms with lightning, tornadoes, hail, or destructive straight-line winds—has already passed over \$13 billion YTD.

Due to this trend, The Cincinnati Insurance Companies decided to proactively address the issue of convective storms and vulnerable commercial roofs. Tammie Whitaker, Cincinnati Insurance Senior Product Developer, says, “We reached out to the Insurtech community for assistance. Because of the complexity and varying types and shapes of commercial roofs, we looked for companies with experience in commercial property risks. Insurtech Betterview had a product that identified commercial roof vulnerabilities as well as a proprietary roof condition scoring product that impressed us.”

Cincinnati worked with Betterview to operationalize the Betterview platform for larger commercial buildings in high wind and hail susceptible regions around the country. Tom Huberty, Cincinnati Vice President, Commercial Property Product, adds, “Betterview’s proprietary roof condition scores offered us a powerful tool for identifying at-risk roofs, allowing us to proactively spot vulnerable roofs early in our underwriting processes.”

Jared Knab, Cincinnati’s Underwriting Manager in the Plains states, notes that “Before our partnership with Betterview, we didn’t have a tool to safely and cost-effectively put ‘eyes’ on commercial roofs. Betterview’s roof condition scores below a certain threshold automatically flag vulnerable roofs as high priority, requiring a discussion between a manager and possibly a loss control consultant to ensure the issues are addressed.”

Another benefit was the impact on the independent agents who work with Cincinnati and their clients. “Many people, even property owners, are not generally aware of the condition of their roofs.” Tammie added. “With Betterview, they can actually see their roof in detail.”

Tammie called out one situation that illustrates the importance of roof imagery to building owners, agents, and underwriting decision-makers. "An insured had done a partial roof replacement about two years ago. With a new image of the property, the underwriter identified staining on the roof. In discussion with the loss control consultant, the underwriter was able to share the images with the agent and discuss the staining and drainage problems associated with the HVAC units located on the roof. Because of the image, the agent and the insured were able to proactively address the condensation from the HVAC units and the drainage issues before a loss could occur. This increased transparency about Cincinnati's underwriting decisions, demonstrated the value of the agent's role in the process, and allowed the insured to make informed decisions about the condition of the roof."

Tammie summed it up nicely: "In the end, it all comes down to trust and adding value for our agents and insureds."