PROPERTY & FACILITY MANAGER GUIDE

Water Damage Insurance in Dubai: Who's Covered for What

Building insurance and contents insurance cover completely different things. A portfolio-level guide to the split, the multi-unit leak scenario, and claims-ready documentation.

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The Core Split

Building insurance, held by the landlord or the owners' association, covers the structure: walls, fixtures, flooring, common areas. It never extends to a tenant's belongings. Contents insurance, held by the tenant if purchased, covers exactly those personal items, plus liability for damage the tenant accidentally causes to a neighbor.

Building Insurance

Landlord, or the OA for apartments

- Structure, walls, flooring
- Fixed fixtures and fittings
- Common areas (apartments)

Contents Insurance

Tenant, optional, often not purchased

- Furniture, electronics, valuables
- Personal belongings generally
- Liability for damage to neighbors

Neither policy covers everything. Contents insurance is not legally required in Dubai, and take-up is genuinely low despite low cost.

The Legal Backbone

> **Article 767(1), UAE Civil Code (Federal Law No. 5 of 1985):** the landlord must repair any defect affecting a tenant's use of the property, with a right for the tenant to seek a court order for repair or cost recovery if the landlord doesn't act.

Dubai's Law No. 26 of 2007 reinforces this locally: Article 16 makes the landlord responsible for maintenance unless the contract states otherwise; Article 17 extends this to damage not caused by the tenant. Neither law mandates a specific insurance policy, insurance is a separate, practical layer on top of a legal obligation that exists regardless.

Apartments vs. Villas

Property type	Who insures the structure
Apartment (jointly owned building)	Owners' association master policy, funded via service charges through Dubai's Mollak system
Villa (standalone)	Individual landlord, no legal mandate unless the property is mortgaged

The Scenario That Tests This: A Leak Between Units

A supply leak upstairs damages the ceiling and flooring below. The upstairs structural damage routes through the OA's master policy or the landlord's own cover. The downstairs tenant's damaged furniture is only recoverable if that tenant holds contents insurance, otherwise they generally have no direct claim against the upstairs landlord's insurance for their belongings. A property manager needs to identify, early, which of several parties and policies is responsible for which piece of the damage.

What's Typically Covered vs. Excluded

"Escape of water" (burst pipes, leaking tanks, failed plumbing) is one of the most frequent Dubai claim categories, usually covered as standard or a common add-on. Most often excluded or contested: damage attributed to a lack of maintenance rather than sudden accidental failure, insurers may ask whether a known prior issue went unaddressed. Full claim mechanics and the DEWA bill adjustment process are covered on our burst pipe repair page.

Building a Claims-Ready Documentation System

The same documentation discipline that supports a tenancy dispute supports an insurance claim. Every incident should generate a timestamped record: source, photos, technician, and repair, ideally as part of the same escalation process covered in our emergency response protocol, layered on top of the preventive maintenance records covered in our maintenance program guide.

A Practical Recommendation

Given how commonly contents insurance goes unpurchased, some property managers now recommend or require it at tenant onboarding. This doesn't change a landlord's building-insurance obligations, but it meaningfully reduces disputes when a tenant's uninsured belongings are damaged by something that isn't the landlord's fault.

Need documentation-ready leak detection for a claim?

Quick Fix Dubai provides reports formatted to support insurance claims. +971 55 209 9785 · admin@quickfixdubai.org

This guide is general information based on Dubai's tenancy law and common UAE insurance market practice, not legal or insurance advice. Policy wording varies significantly between insurers, confirm specifics with a licensed broker or insurer, and consult a lawyer for a specific dispute.