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FEDERAL ALLIANCE FOR SAFE HOMES

Safe Room

A safe room, or storm shelter, provides the highest degree of protection for you and your family from the dangerous forces of extreme winds and debris impacts. Consider the following information for building or installing a safe room in your home.

Safe Room Construction

- Safe rooms can be site-built or manufactured and can be installed in new or existing homes.
- Site-built safe rooms can be constructed with concrete, concrete masonry, and combinations of wood frame and steel sheathing or concrete masonry infill.
- Manufactured safe-rooms are usually built at a plant or assembled on-site.
- Issues critical to performance include:
 1. Safe rooms must be structurally independent from the main structure of your home.
 2. Safe rooms must be securely anchored to the foundation or to a reinforced concrete slab.
 3. Safe rooms installed in or over a crawl space must have a separate foundation.
 4. All components of safe rooms, including walls, ceilings, and door assemblies, must be designed and tested to resist the specified wind forces and prevent perforation by wind-borne debris.
 5. Safe rooms must have adequate ventilation.

Location

- Safe rooms can be located anywhere on the first floor of your home, in a basement, or outside.
- Shelters located outside your home should be accessed immediately when a storm warning is issued.

Wind Forces and Debris Impacts

- Safe rooms must be designed for wind speeds up to 250 mph and debris impacts from a 15 lb. 2x4 board traveling at 100 mph.

Testing and Quality Verification

- Site-built safe rooms should be constructed in accordance with the prescriptive designs of FEMA 320 guidance *Taking Shelter from the Storm: Building a Safe Room For Your Home or Small Business*, and meet the ICC/NSSA 500 standard.
- Manufactured safe rooms and site built safe rooms that deviate from FEMA 320 or the ICC/NSSA 500 standard must be tested for debris impact resistance at an approved laboratory such as the Wind Engineering Research Center at Texas Tech University.
- Verification of compliance with National Storm Shelter Association's "Association Standard," required for membership in the Association, provides the highest level of residential shelter quality.

Emergency and Disaster Supply Kit

- Prepare an emergency plan and have a disaster supply kit available in your safe room.

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the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes!

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