

## **About the Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program**

The *Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program* was developed by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency to provide a rebate for the purchase and installation of safe rooms for Ohio homeowners. Homeowners that are selected for the program are eligible for a rebate of 87.5% of the cost to install/construct a safe room up to a maximum of \$6,000.

Funding for the Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program is made available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (75%), the State of Ohio (12.5%), and homeowner contributions (12.5%). The FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds were made available to the state following the Presidential disaster declaration on July 13, 2011 for flooding and severe storms affecting twenty-one Ohio counties in southern and eastern Ohio.

It is the intent of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency to offer this program on an annual basis, contingent upon federal and/or state funding.

## **About Safe Rooms**

For the purposes of this program, the term safe room will include any above or below ground shelter which meets or exceeds [FEMA Publication 320](#) and/or [FEMA Publication 361](#) guidelines for building a residential safe room. For more information about safe rooms or to download a copy of [FEMA Publication 320](#) and/or [FEMA Publication 361](#), which contains recommended construction plans for safe rooms, visit the FEMA website: <http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/saferoom/residential.shtm>.

Safe rooms save lives. In an average year, 800 tornadoes are reported nationwide, resulting in 80 deaths and more than 1,500 injuries. A safe room provides a shield of protection for you and your family. Studies demonstrate that a safe room can survive winds as high as 250 miles per hour (*Source: FEMA Publication 320*).

## **How the Program Works**

You may apply for the *Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program* online at <https://ohiosharpp.ema.state.oh.us/OhioSafeRoomRebate/>. Applying ensures you will be considered for the program, but does not guarantee that you will receive a rebate.

The program will use a computerized random selection process to select names so that everyone who registers will have an equal chance to be selected. For that reason, the order of registration does not improve the odds of being selected. Only one person may apply per physical house address. Applications must be received by Ohio EMA prior to 5:00 on October 1, 2012. Once the application has been submitted, you must contact the Ohio EMA Mitigation Branch to make changes to the application.

The randomly selected homeowners will be notified on or after October 5, 2012. You will be notified if you are selected for the rebate via the email address indicated in your application. Please be sure to use an email address that you check regularly. You may also log in to your account at any time to check the status.

## **If Your Application is Randomly Selected**

If your application is selected, you will have 30 days to confirm that you still wish to participate in the Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program. You may choose not to participate at this time, but still be eligible for future selection.

Once you have confirmed your participation, you will be required to attend a 1 hour participant briefing. The briefing will cover program rules and provide an additional opportunity to have questions answered. Following the participant briefing and your notice to proceed, you will have until March 1, 2014 to install the safe room on your property. It is the homeowners responsibility to hire a qualified contractor to install/construct a safe room that meets or exceeds [FEMA Publication 320](#) and/or [FEMA Publication 361](#) specifications.

In order to receive the rebate, you must submit a certificate of installation signed by a contractor verifying that your safe room meets or exceeds [FEMA Publication 320](#) and/or [FEMA Publication 361](#) specifications. An inspection may be required to verify safe room installation/construction on the property. The homeowner must also submit documentation required to verify cost and payment. Required documentation includes but may not be limited to:

- Signed Certificate of Installation,
- Contractor invoice,
- Proof of payment,
- Coordinates for the location of the safe room accurate to +/- 64 feet,
- A local building/zoning permit (if required), and
- Before and after photos of the safe/room construction site with sufficient background scenery to verify the safe room location on the property.

You cannot receive a rebate before the safe room is installed/constructed. The rebate is only available as a partial reimbursement after construction is completed and you have submitted the required documentation verifying that your safe room meets or exceeds [FEMA Publication 320](#) and/or [FEMA Publication 361](#) specifications. The Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program cannot reimburse for safe rooms constructed prior to the homeowner application being approved by FEMA and Ohio EMA has advised the property owner to proceed with construction/installation.

## **Additional Program Rules**

Any type of safe room is eligible for the rebate, as long as it meets or exceeds the specifications set forth in [FEMA Publication 320](#) and/or [FEMA Publication 361](#). The safe room must meet criteria in [FEMA Publication 320](#) and/or [FEMA Publication 361](#), and/or meet the [ICC/NSSA Standard for the Design and construction of Storm Shelters](#). In addition, some local building codes require a permit and inspection by local building inspectors.

You may have a safe room installed in a new or existing home, either in an interior room on the first floor, underground on the first floor, as a detached above-ground or underground safe room. Wherever the safe room is installed, it must be readily accessible to all occupants.

The safe room must be sized for the maximum number of people that could reasonably occupy a residence. The rule commonly applied is two occupants per bedroom. FEMA guidance requires a minimum safe room size of three square feet per person, with additional space needed for handicapped occupants.

To be eligible, the safe room must be installed on property owned by the applicant, and that property must be the applicant's primary residence.

If you own two or more homes, you may only register for a safe room rebate for your primary residence.

Apartment complexes, duplexes, and other multi-family residences are not eligible for this rebate, as they are considered businesses. This safe room rebate program is for single-family homes only.

Community or neighborhood safe rooms are not eligible for this rebate. However, they are eligible for grant programs administered by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency Mitigation Branch.

If you live in a mobile home, you must own both the mobile home and the land it is located on to be eligible for the rebate.

If you live in a rented house you are not eligible for this rebate. Only single-family residential homeowners are eligible to receive the rebate for their primary residence.

If you have already installed a safe room, or are having it installed now, that safe room is not eligible for this rebate. Previously installed safe rooms are not eligible.

The retrofit or repair of an existing safe room to meet FEMA specifications is not eligible for this rebate program. However, you may be eligible for a new safe room.

If your home is in a floodplain and you have flood insurance, you may be eligible for the rebate. You would not be eligible for a below ground safe room, but you may be eligible for an above ground safe room. However, other agencies must first approve your specific situation. You may be required to provide more information if your application is randomly selected.

If you live on historic property, or in a historic district you may be eligible for the rebate. However, other agencies must first approve your specific situation. You may be required to provide more information if your application is randomly selected.

If your home was destroyed in a tornado and you plan to rebuild your home in a different location than your previous home you are eligible for this rebate, as long as you are building in Ohio, it will be your primary residence and all other eligibility criteria are satisfied.

If your home was destroyed in Ohio and you are rebuilding your home out of state you are not eligible for this rebate.

You may not build or install the safe room yourself. The 12.5% homeowner contribution must be in the form of payment to the safe room builder/installer.

### **Additional Information**

The cost of a safe room varies depending on a number of factors, including size and type of safe room. Construction industry experts estimate the cost to range from \$2,000 to \$8,000 or more.