



MEDIA RELEASE

Emergency Management Agency

Ohio Emergency Management Agency • Nancy J. Dragani, Executive Director
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 31, 2012

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EMA INTRODUCES THE OHIO SAFE ROOM REBATE PROGRAM *Homeowners Interested in Constructing a Tornado Shelter May Be Eligible*

COLUMBUS, OH – The Mitigation Branch of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency announced today the Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program, which provides a rebate for the purchase and installation of safe rooms for Ohio homeowners. State officials anticipate the program will aid in the construction of 150 safe rooms.

A safe room is an extreme-wind shelter or space that provides protection to people during a tornado or hurricane. A safe room can be built in one of several places in the home: in the basement, beneath a concrete slab-on-grade foundation or garage floor, in an interior room on the first floor, or buried in the yard near the home.

“Not only is Ohio at risk of EF5 tornadoes, since as far back as 1968, the state has actually had nine,” said Steve Ferryman, Ohio EMA mitigation branch chief. “EF5 tornadoes produce winds exceeding 200 mph and are capable of destroying most structures. A safe room is built to withstand these winds and airborne debris. A safe room provides near-absolute protection for its occupants.”

Residents selected for program are eligible for a rebate up to 87.5 percent of the cost to install or construct a safe room – up to a maximum of \$6,000. To apply for the Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program, homeowners have until 5 p.m. October 1 to register on the Ohio EMA website: <https://ohiosharpp.ema.state.oh.us/OhioSafeRoomRebate/>.

The Ohio Safe Room Program will use a computerized random selection process to select names. Chosen homeowners will be notified by e-mail on or after October 5, 2012.

Funding for rebate program is through a partnership between the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (75 percent) and the state of Ohio (12.5 percent). Ohio homeowners would be responsible for 12.5 percent of the construction costs.

Safe rooms must meet FEMA requirements in accordance to FEMA publications 320 and 361, and cannot be constructed/installed prior to the rebate drawing and notification from Ohio EMA to proceed with construction. It is Ohio EMA’s intent to offer this rebate program on an annual basis, contingent upon the availability federal and state funding.

For additional information on safe rooms or to view and download the FEMA publications, visit the FEMA website: <http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/saferoom/residential.shtm>.

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