



MEDIA RELEASE

Emergency Management Agency

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

COLUMBUS, OH - The Mitigation and Recovery 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 approximately 39 safe rooms. An additional nine homeowners are eligible from last year's rebate program.

A safe room is an extreme-wind shelter or space that provides protection to people during a tornado or high wind event. A safe room can be built in one of several places in the home: in the basement, beneath a concrete foundation or garage floor, or in an interior room on the first floor. A safe room can also be buried in the yard near the home or installed above ground, exterior of 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 the program are eligible for a rebate up to 75 percent of the cost to install or construct a safe room – up to a maximum of \$5,250. To apply for the Ohio Safe Room Rebate Program, homeowners have until 5 p.m. April 18, 2014 to register on the Ohio EMA website: <https://ohiosharpp.ema.state.oh.us/saferoom2014/>.

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 April 22, 2014.

Funding for the rebate program is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program at a 75 percent cost share. Homeowners selected will be responsible for 25 percent of the costs and any additional costs over the maximum rebate of up to \$5,250.

Safe rooms constructed and/or installed under the program must meet FEMA requirements in accordance to FEMA publications 320 and/or 361 and the International Code Council (ICC) 500 Standard for the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters adopted by the State of Ohio. Safe rooms cannot be constructed and/or 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 of 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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