



## ICC NEWS RELEASE

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[www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org)

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### **“Bounce Back Faster from Disaster—Build to Code” is the Theme for Building Safety Month Week 2**

*Actions ensure that homes, businesses and communities are disaster resilient*

While natural disasters cannot be stopped, there are actions citizens can take to increase the chance of survival and recovery for their homes, businesses and communities. The adoption of current model building codes and standards developed by the [International Code Council and its Family of Companies](#) (ICC), a strong and efficient system of code application, and a professional workforce of dedicated Building Safety Professionals are keys to mitigating disasters in jurisdictions throughout the United States. Other measures such as creating family disaster plans, reviewing evacuation routes and taking shelter can protect lives and property.

Since 1980, [Building Safety Month](#) has been an annual public safety awareness campaign. Sponsored by the Portland Cement Association (PCA), the theme for week two of Building Safety Month 2015, May 11-17, is [“Bounce Back Faster from Disaster—Build to Code.”](#)

“Disasters can strike at a moment’s notice and their power can be overwhelming,” explained ICC Board of Directors President Guy Tomberlin, CBO. “Mitigation is crucial for the short- and long-term recoveries of communities. Building to current codes and standards and being prepared are the foundation for a healthy built environment.”

Published by ICC, the *International Codes* and supporting standards such as ICC 500 Standard for the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters and ICC 600 Standard for Residential Construction in High-Wind Regions provide disaster-resistant safeguards for the built environment. Several online resources also are available to help families and home and business owners withstand disasters.

“Today, several programs are in place that increase the likelihood that homes and businesses will be functional after a disaster,” said Steve Szoke, P.E., Director of Codes and Standards for PCA. “The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety offers FORTIFIED for Safer Living and FORTIFIED for Safer Business, there are a variety of guides from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security launched the pilot program Resilient Star for homeowners. The success of these programs is improved when the starting point is local code based on the latest editions of the *International Building Code* and the *International Residential Code*.”

Following are tips for families when preparing for any emergency:

- Develop a family disaster plan that includes a list of food and water supplies needed for each family member and supplies for pets. Make copies of important documents such as insurance policies, the deed to the home, and other personal papers, important phone numbers and a home inventory. Create a checklist of important things to do before, during and after a disaster.
- Make sure the home is properly anchored to its foundation, and make sure water heaters, large furniture and other home items that can become dangerous in a disaster are properly secured.
- Taking shelter is critical in times of disaster. Sheltering in place is appropriate when conditions require occupants to seek protection in their homes, places of employment, or other locations when disasters strike.
- Know where and how to shut off electricity, gas, and water services if it is safe to do so.
- Review evacuation routes and emergency shelter locations. Options for evacuation include staying with friends and relatives, seeking commercial lodging, or staying in a mass care facility operated by disaster relief groups in conjunction with local authorities.
- Review disaster plans regularly and update any changes immediately.

Go to [FLASH.org](https://www.flash.org) or [www.safestronghome.com](http://www.safestronghome.com) for more information on how to protect your home.

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About us: The [International Code Council](https://www.iccsafe.org/) is a member-focused association. It is dedicated to developing model codes and standards used in the design, build and compliance process to construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures. Most U.S. communities and many global markets [choose the International Codes](#)