



Mitigation (Before & After)

WHAT IT IS

Mitigation is any sustained action taken to eliminate or reduce future risk to people and property from disasters. Mitigation saves time and money by decreasing real-world damages.

Mitigation can take place anytime, but the intent is always to reduce risk from future hazard

FACTS

- A study by the National Institute of Building Sciences shows that investments in hazard mitigation (by exceeding local building code requirements) save \$4 for every \$1 spent.
- **Base flood elevation** (or BFE) marks the “100-year flood” or, more precisely, the “1 percent annual chance flood.” This is the elevation at which there is a 1-in-100 chance of a flood each year, according to FEMA’s flood maps. Elevating above the BFE – known as “freeboard” – further reduces flood risk. To find out the flood risk of any US address, see <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>

WHAT MITIGATION ACTIVITIES SHOULD YOU DO?

Mitigation requires looking at the risks faced by the region and your particular property, identifying vulnerabilities, and taking steps to address them. Here are some examples:

FLOODING

- Are you in a flood plain? Consider elevating your home’s lowest floor to – or above – the “base flood elevation.” This can lower flood insurance premiums and reduce loss incurred by future floods.
- Consider installing a backflow valve on your sewer system to prevent sewage back up in your home.
- Seal your basement walls with waterproofing compounds.
- Use flood-resistant materials in lower levels of your home, including replacing carpet with tile or using flood resistant insulation and concrete wallboard. 3 Don’t store anything of value (monetary or sentimental) in lower levels of a flood-prone property.

FIRE

- Test smoke detectors monthly and change batteries twice a year.
- Landscape wisely; use fire resistant shrubs to minimize the spread of fire around your house.

HIGH WINDS

- Reinforce garage doors and double-entry doors to prevent failure under wind pressure.
- Install hurricane shutters to protect windows and glass doors.



- Ensure your roof, windows/doors, and garage doors are secure.
- Secure items outside your home, especially if high winds are forecasted.
- Anchor any outdoor fuel tanks.
- Trim trees.

UTILITY CONTINUITY

- Invest in alternative electrical sources: Have a generator and fuel to power essential needs.
- If you have medical needs that need a power source, be sure to plan ahead in case the power is out.
- Keep a phone that plugs into the wall and has a wired (not remote) handset, and maintain copper-wire “land-line” phone service, or else invest in adequate battery backup if you have Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone service.

INSURANCE

- Obtain insurance for your house or apartment (whether you own or rent): including fire, flood, or renters’ insurance.
- Keep an inventory of what is in your house. Take photographs and video of each room and all of your valuables.
- Make copies of the pictures and save them on a USB drive; keep the originals in a safe place.

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

- Make copies of your family’s vital records, identification, and proof of residence.
- Maintain copies of insurance and financial information (financial accounts).
- Create a personal property inventory with photographs or video and values of items.
- If you live in a mobile or manufactured home, consider:
 - Making sure your home is anchored securely.
 - Evacuating early whenever a tropical storm, hurricane, or tornado is imminent.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- Get all recommended vaccines, including an annual flu shot. Put a copy of your vaccination records in your emergency kit.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or upper sleeve.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.