



Natural disasters are increasing in severity and frequency. Advance planning for devastating events like hurricanes, floods, snowstorms, tornadoes, wildfires and earthquakes helps individuals and communities increase the health and safety of their population during a disaster, protects the local tax base, ensures continuity of essential services and supports a faster recovery in the aftermath of a disaster. Here's how you can help your family and community:

## Prepare Your Family

Although no one can prevent natural disasters from occurring, there are many things you can do to make the impact less devastating for your family.

Making sure your family is prepared for any natural disaster is important. Below are some of the steps you can take to prepare your family and protect your home from natural disasters. Your actions can ensure that no matter what Mother Nature brings, you, your family and your community will be resilient.

Every home should have 3 key elements in place before a disaster strikes:

- Evacuation Plan
- Communication Plan
- Emergency Supply Kit

Below are some resources the Code Council has to help you prepare your family and protect your home from natural disasters.



## Protect Your Home

The power of natural disasters can be overwhelming. While you can't necessarily stop them from happening, there are steps you can take to increase your home's chance of survival, even in the face of the worst that Mother Nature can dish out. Protecting your home can range from taking simple measures like protecting windows or elevating appliances, to more complete building retrofit measures.

## Build to the Latest Codes

One of the best ways for communities to prepare for disasters is to build to the most up-to-date, modern building codes. Disaster mitigation through the adoption and enforcement of building codes provides you, your family and your community protection in the event of a natural disaster. It is also very important that codes are properly applied. Proper application requires that local building departments be sufficiently staffed with plan reviewers, inspectors and other qualified professionals, and that building officials are trained and stay up to date with code advancements through continuing education. When states and local jurisdictions apply the latest codes and they are diligently enforced, they are more likely to qualify for federal pre-disaster mitigation funding and for more post-disaster recovery assistance. Further, newly expanded [FEMA grants](#) in the U.S. will fund code adoption, administration and enforcement pre- and post-disaster – providing new resources for U.S. communities to update or build out enforcement efforts. The development and widespread adoption of building codes creates a uniform regulatory environment in which design professionals and contractors are held to a set of standards adopted by and applicable to the jurisdiction in which they work.

To learn more about building codes, check out:

- [Introduction to Building Codes](#)
- [Building Codes: How They Help You](#)
- [Benefits of Building Permits](#)
- [FEMAs Building Codes Toolkit](#)

### Benchmark Your Community's Resilience

There are important measures that can be taken at a community level to reduce the impacts of disasters. Benchmarks allow a community to identify how resilient they currently are and the steps they can take to improve. Learn more about resilience and the I-Codes in [Week Four: Resilience. Sustainability. Innovation.](#)