



Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Q. What is the SoonerSafe - Safe Room Rebate Program?**
A. A program to provide a rebate for purchase and installation of safe rooms for Oklahoma homeowners.
- 2. Q. What is a safe room?**
A. For the purposes of this program, the term safe room will include any above or below ground shelter which meets or exceeds FEMA 320 guidelines for building a residential safe room. For more information about safe rooms or to download a copy of *FEMA Publication 320*, which contains recommended construction plans for safe rooms, visit the FEMA website www.fema.gov/mit/saferoom.
- 3. Q. Why do I need a safe room?**
A. Safe rooms save lives. In an average year, 800 tornadoes are reported nationwide, resulting in 80 deaths and more than 1,500 injuries. A safe room provides a shield of protection for you and your family.
- 4. Q. How safe is a safe room?**
A. Studies demonstrate that a safe room can survive winds as high as 250 miles per hour (*Source: FEMA Publication 320*).
- 5. Q. How is Oklahoma able to provide this safe room rebate program?**
A. Through the use of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds that the State receives as a result of presidentially-declared disasters.
- 6. Q. How do I register for this safe room rebate program?**
A. You may register online at www.soonersafe.ok.gov. Registering ensures you will be considered for the program, but does not guarantee that you will receive a rebate.
- 7. Q. Does registering on this website mean that I will receive a rebate?**
A. Registering ensures you will be considered for the program, but does not guarantee that you will receive a rebate.
- 8. Q. How will you select who receives rebates?**
A. The *SoonerSafe - Safe Room Rebate Program* will use a random selection process to select names so that everyone who registers will have an equal chance to be selected. However, any Oklahoma homeowner whose home was destroyed in the April 14, 2011 tornado or May 22-25, 2011 tornadoes will receive priority selection for a safe room rebate as part of this year's program.
- 9. Q. What is the maximum rebate amount that I could receive?**
A. A maximum rebate of \$2,000 is available per home, not to exceed 75 percent of the actual cost of the safe room.

- 10. Q. What types of shelters are eligible for the rebate?**
A. Any type of safe room is eligible for the rebate as long as it meets or exceeds the specifications set forth in FEMA Publication 320. Also, many local building codes require a permit and inspection by local building inspectors. Retrofitting an existing storm shelter to meet FEMA specifications does not qualify, however. Only new safe rooms are eligible.
- 11. Q. What types of homes are eligible for safe rooms?**
A. The safe room must be installed by individual homeowners in primary residences and must be installed on property owned by the applicant. The program is limited to single-family homes.
- 12. Q. My home or mobile home was destroyed in this year's tornado. Will I receive any special priority for this rebate?**
A. Yes. For this year's program, any Oklahoma homeowner whose home was destroyed in the April 14, 2011 tornado or May 22-25, 2011 tornadoes will receive priority selection for a safe room rebate, providing that all other terms and conditions for eligibility are met. You will need your FEMA case number for confirmation.
- 13. Q. I live in a mobile home. Am I eligible for this rebate?**
A. Perhaps. Mobile home residents must own both the mobile home itself and the land it is located on to be eligible for the rebate.
- 14. Q. I live in a rented house, but I want to build a safe room. Can I get this rebate?**
A. No. Only single-family residential homeowners are eligible to receive the rebate for their primary residence.
- 15. Q. Is an apartment complex, duplex or other multi-family residence eligible for this rebate?**
A. No. For the purpose of this initiative, apartment complexes, duplexes or other multi-family residences are considered businesses. This safe room rebate program is for individual homeowners, not businesses.
- 16. Q. I own two or more homes. Can I register for a safe room rebate for each home I own?**
A. No. You are only eligible for a rebate for your primary residence.
- 17. Q. I would like to install a community or neighborhood safe room. Am I eligible for this rebate?**
A. No. The rebate is for individual homeowners only.
- 18. Q. If I have already installed my safe room or am having it installed now, am I eligible for this rebate?**
A. No. Previously installed safe rooms are not eligible.
- 19. Q. Can multiple people in my household register for a rebate?**
A. No. Only one person may register per physical home address.
- 20. Q. When is the safe room rebate registration deadline for this year's program?**
A. The random selection process will take place on January 3, 2012.

- 21. Q. How will I be notified if I am selected for a rebate?**
A. You will be notified via the email address you provide when you register. Please be sure to use an email address you check regularly. The list of selected registration numbers will be available at oem.ok.gov after the selection process takes place. You may also log in to your account at any time to check the status.
- 22. Q. If my application is selected, what will I need to do to receive my rebate?**
A. Final required documentation is under review by FEMA and OEM.
- 23. Q. If my application is selected, how long do I have to get my safe room installed?**
A. You have until September 30, 2012 to install the safe room on your property and submit all of the required documentation verifying that your safe room meets or exceeds FEMA Publication 320 specifications.
- 24. Q. How long will it take to receive my rebate check after I install my safe room and provide all of the required documentation?**
A. Shortly after the required documentation is verified by the State of Oklahoma.
- 25. Q. Can I mail or fax in a registration form instead of submitting it online?**
A. No. Registration is only available online at www.soonersafe.ok.gov.
- 26. Q. Can I change my address or other information on my application after I register?**
A. Yes. You may log back in to your account at any time to update your information.
- 27. Q. How do I delete my application if I change my mind or move out of state?**
A. You may log in to your account at any time and delete your application if necessary.
- 28. Q. If I am selected, will I be required to install a safe room?**
A. No. Once you are notified that you have been selected, you will have 30 days to confirm your participation. You may choose not to participate at this time but still be eligible for future selection.
- 29. Q. I cannot remember my account login information. How can I access my account?**
A. There is an option on the account login page to reset your lost password or username.
- 30. Q. My home was destroyed in a tornado. I plan to rebuild my home in a different location than my previous home. Am I eligible for this rebate if I install a safe room?**
A. Yes, as long as you are building in Oklahoma and it is your primary residence.
- 31. Q. My home was destroyed in Oklahoma and I am rebuilding my home out of state. Am I eligible for this rebate?**
A. No. The safe room must be built in Oklahoma.
- 32. Q. I have an old shelter that is in disrepair. Can I get a rebate to fix it?**
A. No, but you may be eligible for a new safe room.

35. **Q. I want to build a safe room myself, without a contractor, using FEMA Publication 320. If I provide receipts for materials, will I be eligible for this rebate?**
A. No.
36. **Q. Where should I install a safe room?**
A. You can install a safe room in a new or existing home, either in an interior room on the first floor, underground on the first floor or as a detached above-ground or underground safe room and within 100 feet of the home. Wherever you install it, the safe room should be readily accessible to all occupants.
37. **Q. What is the cost of a safe room?**
A. Safe room construction costs vary depending on a number of factors including size and type of safe room. Construction industry experts estimate the cost to range from \$2,000 to \$8,000 or more.
38. **Q. If I am selected, can I receive my rebate before my safe room is installed so that I can pay my contractor?**
A. No. The rebate is only available as a partial reimbursement after construction is completed and you have submitted the required documentation verifying that your safe room meets or exceeds FEMA Publication 320 specifications.
39. **Q. Am I eligible for a rebate if my home is in a floodplain and I have flood insurance?**
A. Perhaps. You would not be eligible for a below ground safe room, but you may be eligible for an above ground safe room. However, other agencies will have to approve your specific situation. You may be required to provide more information as needed.
40. **Q. I live in a historic property or in a historic district. Am I eligible for this rebate?**
A. Perhaps. However, other agencies will have to approve your specific situation. You may be required to provide more information as needed.
41. **Q. If my city or county is also offering a safe room rebate program, can I participate in both?**
A. Yes. This program will not affect city or county residential safe room rebate programs. If a program is being offered in your city or county, you may register for that rebate program also, as that will give you an additional opportunity to receive a rebate.
42. **Q. If I am eligible to receive the rebate, will I have to claim it as income on my taxes?**
A. No. The safe room rebate is exempt from tax liability as a federally funded assistance program.
43. **Q. If I build a safe room, can I claim any tax exemptions?**
A. Yes. The Oklahoma Constitution provides for up to one hundred square feet of a Safe room installed after January 1, 2002 shall be exempt from taxation.

44. Q. **Am I eligible for any kind of State or Federal tax incentive if I build or install a safe room?**
- A. No. There are no State or Federal tax incentives associated with this safe room rebate program at this time.