

# Building Safety Starts with You

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Release Date: 5? 1, 2023

**CHICAGO** – May is Building Safety Month, and this year’s campaign, “It Starts with You,” reinforces the need for the adoption of modern, regularly updated building codes, and helps individuals, families and businesses understand what it takes to create safe and sustainable structures.

“One of the most effective ways to safeguard our communities against natural disasters is to adopt and follow hazard-resistant building codes,” said FEMA Region 5 Regional Administrator Tom Sivak. “As climate change causes more frequent, intense weather events, smart construction codes and standards have become imperative to saving lives, protecting property and building disaster resilience in the places we call home.”

To see what codes your community has adopted to protect you, you can visit sites like [www.InspectToProtect.org](http://www.InspectToProtect.org). Once you know this information, reach out to your community’s decision makers to implement changes in your area that help make your community safer and stronger.

Consider taking additional steps to help make your home safer and stronger:

1. **Elevate and anchor utilities.** Elevate and anchor your critical utilities, including electrical panels, propane tanks, sockets, wiring, appliances, and heating systems to reduce the risk of flood waters damaging them.
2. **Waterproof your basement.** Install a water alarm and maintain a working sump pump to protect your basement. Install a battery-operated backup pump in case of power failure. Consider also installing a back-flow valve, to push the flow of water & sewer backup away from your property.
3. **Protect windows during high-wind events.** Consider adding storm shutters, shatter-resistant film or stormproof high-impact glass to reduce the risks of glass breaking from flying debris.
4. **Fortify your roof.** Re-adhere any loose shingles and consider impact-resistant shingles on your roof. Install roof strappings to anchor the roof framing to the wall framings so the wind can’t lift your roof off your house.



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5. **Take advantage of insurance incentives.** Many insurance policies offer financial incentives for risk reduction measures. For example, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) will cover up to \$1,000 in reasonable expenses incurred to protect your insured property. Call your insurance agent for more information about benefits that may be available to you.

For more information about Building Safety Month or ways to increase awareness about building safety visit [2023 Building Safety Month - ICC \(iccsafe.org\)](https://www.iccsafe.org). Learn even more about how to prepare before a disaster strikes by visiting [www.Ready.gov](https://www.Ready.gov).

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*FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.*

