

West Central Texas Individual Safe Room Program



GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION



*Funding for this program made possible by the Texas Division of Emergency Management and
the Federal Emergency Management Agency*

West Central Texas Residential Safe Room Rebate Program Guidelines

The West Central Texas Council of Governments (WCTCOG) is implementing a Safe Room/Storm Shelter Rebate Program. The Residential Safe Room Rebate Program is being funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM).

- This program is only intended to serve the 19 - county area of the West Central Texas Council of Governments. This includes the counties of Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Fisher, Haskell, Jones, Kent, Knox, Mitchell, Nolan, Runnels, Scurry, Shackelford, Stephens, Stonewall, Taylor, and Throckmorton.
- The FEMA/TDEM program rules state the applicants must be the owner of the home, at the time of rebate award, or a builder or developer, in which the safe room is to be built. The rules also require the home be a single family dwelling or duplex that lies outside a FEMA or locally mapped 100 - year floodplain.
- FEMA Floodplain map link <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>
- For the purpose of this program, a safe room/storm shelter is an above or below ground unit built to the FEMA P-320, Sixth Edition (Taking Shelter from the Storm), FEMA P-361, Fourth Edition (Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes), and ICC 500-2023 design standards. A safe room built according to these standards is expected to withstand the forces imposed on it by extreme winds without failing. The only units authorized for rebate support under this program will be units certified as meeting the FEMA P-320, FEMA P-361 and ICC 500-2012 standards
- This is a 50:50 matching program that will provide homeowners a rebate of up to \$3,000 to offset the cost of installing a safe room/storm shelter, built to current FEMA design standard requirements, in a residence. Homeowners must first apply for a rebate and receive a written confirmation of rebate award from the WCTCOG before being assured of receiving this assistance. The application will be used to determine eligibility. The applicant must pay 100% for the safe room upfront.
- Citizen participation is voluntary. Your signature on the Signed Statement of Voluntary Participation designates that an applicant is choosing to participate in the rebate program of their own volition.
- Rebates are not transferrable. Rebate awards are only applicable to the recipient(s) named in the original application received by WCTCOG and cannot be transferred to another person. Homeowner must provide proof of payment in full.
- Applicant must agree to have the shelter's Lat/Long (GPS) information be submitted to their local emergency management coordinator for inclusion in any emergency 911

databases accessible by fire and police. This release allows first responders to more quickly locate persons following an event, that the shelter would become necessary to utilize. Your signature on the Signed Statement of Voluntary Participation designates that you agree to have the shelter's Lat/Long information submitted to these databases.

- The rebate program is **not** retroactive. Any safe rooms/storm shelters installed prior to an applicant receiving a rebate award from WCTCOG is not eligible for rebate.
- Applicant must agree to have WCTCOG representative to conduct a site visit and take pictures of shelter (WCTCOG must photo-document the shelter for FEMA reimbursement purposes).
- Applicant must submit all necessary paperwork to WCTCOG as required by the program to be eligible for a rebate. Which includes, but is not limited to:

Before Installation

- Completed, signed application; and
- Provide proof of ownership of the property, (i.e. current appraisal statement); and
- Copy of Flood Insurance Rate Map or statement from the local floodplain administrator assuring the property is not located in the floodplain; and <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>

After Installation

- Copies of the signed and notarized Texas Division of Emergency Management Certificate of Installation and Inspection; and
- Copies of contractor invoices, building permits, inspections or certificates of occupancy; and
- Copies of proof of payment for all costs claimed, such as copy of front and back of cancelled check or copy of bankcard statement showing debit/credit payment; and
- Required latitude/longitude information for storm shelter in decimal degrees with five (5) decimal places; and can be verified from the FEMA floodplain map
- Copies of paperwork (to FEMA's requirements) that shelter was designed and installed according to current FEMA design standards

- Applicant must verify that all responses and documentation are true and valid by signing and dating application and signed statement of voluntary participation.
- WCTCOG's process for awarding participation in the rebate program and managing the queue of applications is dependent upon receipt of funding. Upon WCTCOG receiving an award from Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), WCTCOG will use a first come, first serve basis to award rebates. Please note there is a high probability that WCTCOG will receive more applications than can be funded. **Rebates are not guaranteed.** Rebates will only be awarded as funding is received. Applicants must meet all of the eligibility and installation requirements to receive a rebate.

The steps for requesting and potentially receiving a rebate are described below.

Step 1: *You should determine if the residence in which the safe room/storm shelter would be installed lies within a FEMA or locally-mapped floodplain.*

FEMA prohibits the use of these rebate dollars to support the cost of installing safe rooms or storm shelters in residences that lie inside a “floodplain”. For the purpose of this requirement, homes built within a FEMA designated Special Flood Hazard Area (or Zone) are considered to be in the “floodplain” and ineligible for rebate. The local flood plain manager will verify whether or not a property is in a floodplain.

There are a several ways this determination can be made. Rebate applicants can:

- Contact their local city code enforcement officer or county floodplain administrator to determine if their property is in a Special Flood Hazard Area; or
- Go to FEMA’s website at: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>, and enter your address in the search box. Click on the “View Map” option to view your FIRM. Then click on “Make a FIRMette” on the left; or
- Contact WCTCOG program staff for assistance in making that determination.

Step 2: *On the Rebate Application form, you’ll certify, by signature, that you are the owner occupant, builder, or developer of the residence in which the unit is to be installed. Please note this information will be confirmed. These terms are defined below.*

- *Owner* – legally own the home. Fixed Property, owner of both land and buildings.
- *Builder* – You’re building the home in which the unit will be installed either for your own occupancy or as a contractor for another owner occupant/developer.
- *Developer* – You’re developing a property or properties, contracting with a builder to install a unit in a residence for sale to another owner occupant.

Step 3: On the Rebate Application form, you will indicate the year that your home was originally built. **Any home that is more than 45 years old will need to be evaluated by Texas Historical Commission (THC) prior to installation of a storm shelter.** Storm shelters installed prior to THC approval are not eligible for rebate. Additional information will be requested should your home need to be evaluated by THC. Visit <https://xapps.thc.state.tx.us/106Review/> <https://xapps.thc.state.tx.us/106Review/> if your home is over 45 years old.

Step 4: *Complete and submit your rebate application.*

The original signed or electronically signed application must be submitted; this will serve as your certification that the information contained in the application is true.

Step 5: *Wait for Rebate Award Letter from WCTCOG.*

If your application is selected for rebate, you will receive a letter of notification from the WCTCOG authorizing you to proceed with the unit installation. This program is not retroactive. Shelters installed prior to notification of rebate award by WCTCOG are not eligible for rebate.

Step 6: *Identify the contractor who will provide and install the unit in your home.*

Safe rooms/storm shelters come in a variety of shapes and sizes, above ground, others lie below ground. However, for the purpose of this program and because it is a requirement of the TDEM, any unit on which a rebate is paid under this program must be built to FEMA design standards. Current FEMA guidance requires installers comply with the below publications:

- FEMA P-320, Fourth Edition (Taking Shelter from the Storm)
- FEMA P-361, Third Edition (Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes)
- ICC 500-2014

Residents are encouraged to contact several different contractors to determine which unit will best suit their needs. Paperwork providing proof of compliance with FEMA design standards will be required.

Step 7: *Complete the installation of the unit and submit your documentation per the instructions provided in the WCTCOG letter of notification you will receive (if awarded) authorizing you to proceed with the unit installation.*

To enable the WCTCOG to process the rebate, you will need to submit the following record documents once the unit has been installed:

- A signed statement from you that your participation in this program has been strictly voluntary; and
- the notarized Certificate of Installation; and
- copies of all invoices received showing payments made by the applicant; and
- other paperwork as necessary.

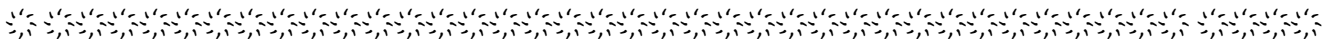
Step 8: FEMA/TDEM requires the GPS coordinate positioning of each home receiving a unit under this program be recorded. Therefore, as a step in the rebate payment process, WCTCOG staff will make a visit to each unit site, verify the existence of the unit and record the longitude/latitude coordinates of the residence in which the unit has been installed. The street address of the residence will be provided to the local 9-1-1 dispatch to speed potential search and rescue operations following a storm(s). As a provision of rebate payment, the owner occupant, builder, or developer will have to agree to this data gathering step by the WCTCOG. This is done on the Statement of Voluntary Participation form you will receive with your approval papers.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Rebate Application Form
WCTCOG is currently accepting applications for rebates on safe room/storm shelters to be installed. Rebates are not guaranteed. Rebates are contingent upon receipt of funding. This application form will enable WCTCOG staff to determine eligibility.
- Attachment 2 – Checklist
- Attachment 3 – Vendor List
- Attachment 4 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Attachment 5 – P-320 Taking Shelter from the Storm – Digitally attached to email
- Attachment 6 – P-361 Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes – Digitally attached to email



ATTACHMENT #1: APPLICATION



*Funding for this program made possible by the Texas Division of Emergency Management and
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West Central Texas Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Program Rebate Application

The West Central Texas Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Program is being funded under a grant provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). This is a rebate program designed to help homeowners offset the cost of installing above or below ground shelters, meeting FEMA P-320 standards, in homes throughout the 19 counties of West Central Texas Region. Application completion instructions are included. Completion of this application form serves as your notice of interest to participate in this program. For questions, please email jmarcotte@westcentraltexas.org.

Section A: Applicant Information

This section must be completed by the owner of the home in which the safe room would be built. Provide a response to all the fields listed.

Select One: Homeowner Builder Developer

Applicant Name:

Phone #:

Email:

Mailing Address:

City:

Zip Code:

Section B: Installation Address

Provide a response to all the fields listed. List the designated 9-1-1 address of the home in which the safe room would be installed.

911 Address:

City:

Zip Code:

County:

Section C: Dwelling Information

Click the box next to the option that best describes the type of dwelling in which the safe room would be built.

VERY IMPORTANT: *For existing homes, please include the date of the home's construction. Additional assessment may be needed for homes over 45 years old.*

Existing Units

Single Family

Multi Family

Mobile Home

Existing Units Year Built:

This section is only to be completed for new homes being built. Provide a legal location description of the home in which the safe room is to be built. A separate form must be completed for each new home in which the homeowner proposes to construct a safe room/storm shelter.

Planned New Construction

Single Family

Multi Family

Mobile Home

Subdivision:

Section/Lot:

Block/Abstract:

Section D: Property GPS Coordinates (Five [5] decimal places)

Provide the Global Positioning System (GPS) of your property. If you need assistance, please leave this section blank and WCTCOG staff will confirm GPS upon receipt of application.

Latitude:

Longitude:

Section E: Flood Plain Confirmation

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prohibits the use of these Residential Safe Room Rebate program funds to construct safe rooms in homes that lie within a FEMA or locally-mapped flood plain. FEMA depicts designated flood hazard areas on documents referred to as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (or FIRMS). FIRMS can be viewed at: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>. The information will be confirmed as part of the application review process.

YES, I have confirmed that the Dwelling is not located in a FEMA or locally-mapped flood plain.

Section F: Acknowledgment

- The submission of this form does not guarantee a rebate.
- This program provides up to 50% but no more than \$3,000.00 of the costs of purchasing & installing a residential shelter built to FEMA 320 standards.
- My property is not located in a FEMA- designated flood hazard area.
- I am voluntarily participating in this program, and to the best of my knowledge, the information I've provided here is true and correct.
- Call 811 before you dig, if you are placing storm shelter underground

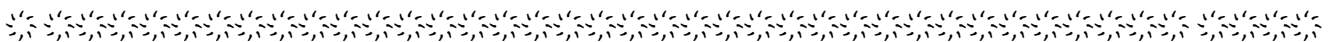
Signature of Homeowner

Date

Submit your completed and signed form to:
jmarcotte@westcentraltexas.org or
West Central Texas Council of Governments
Attn: Jacob Marcotte
3702 Loop 322
Abilene, Tx 79602



ATTACHEMENT #2: CHECKLIST



*Funding for this program made possible by the Texas Division of Emergency Management and
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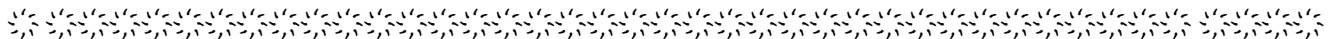
West Central Texas Individual Safe Room Program

Application forms needed <u>BEFORE</u> any construction, installation, or purchase of Safe Room:	Homeowner Please Initial:	Agency Use Please Initial:
Applicant Name		
Property Address		
Property GPS Coordinates		
Applicant Contact Information		
Type of Dwelling where unit will be installed		
Mailing Address		
Planned new Construction (if applicable)		
Flood Plain Confirmation		
Signature of Rebate Acknowledgement		
Proof of Ownership (i.e. current appraisal statement)		
Flood Zone Documentation (i.e. statement, letter, building permit)		
Provide WCTCOG with Vendor Contact Information		
Storm Shelter Meets FEMA Standards (ICC 500 Compliant storm shelter or FEMA P-361-compliant safe room)		

When requesting a rebate following completion of the Safe Room installation, I understand I must provide WCTCOG with <u>all required backup documentation as listed below:</u>	Homeowner Please Initial:	Agency Use Please Initial:
Certificate of installation/inspection for Residential Safe Rooms Form		
Contractor invoices, building permits, proof of payment and any additional required permits, etc.		
Proof of Payment (i.e. cancelled check or bank statement)		
Finalized Latitude/Longitude information to five (5) decimal places (To be confirmed by WCTCOG staff)		
Picture of completed Safe Room (To be taken by WCTCOG staff)		
Provide WCTCOG staff access to conduct a final Safe Room Inspection		



ATTACHEMENT #3: VENDOR LIST



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Please note this list is not all inclusive and is not a guarantee of workmanship. West Central Texas Council of Government has not worked with any of these vendors and do not have a working relationship with them. It is applicants responsibility to get a copy of certifications and invoices to provide to West Central Texas Council of Governments for reimbursement.

Storm Shelter Vendors

American Tornado Master

Website: <https://tornadomaster.com/>
22640 East NW HWY #409
Dallas , Texas 75228
Phone: (972) 686-7733
tornadomaster1@sbcglobal.net

Dulworth Enterprises, Inc.

Website: dulworthseptic.com
5021 SE McKinney
Rice, TX 75155
Phone: (972) 617-4100
Cell: (972) 670-8360
Fax: (800) 956-6208
dulworth@gmail.com

Forever Safe Rooms

Website: <https://foreversafeshelters.com/>
11293 State Hwy 19 N.
Athens , TX 75752
Phone: (903) 675-8424
Cell: (214) 850-2246

Hausner's Limited

Website: www.gohausner.com
8883 US Hwy 70 Mead OK 73449
P.O. Box 1307
Phone: (580) 924-6988
gregg@gohausner.com

Lawton Septic Tank And Storm Shelter Inc.

2401 SE 45th Lawton, OK 73501
Phone: (580) 248-3131
Cell: (580) 917-3131

Armour Guard Storm Shelters

Website: www.armourguardshelters.com
9033 Old Nacogdoches Trl.
Forney, TX 75126
Phone: (214) 517-9821
Jewing@armourguardstormshelters.com

EF-5 Shelters Inc.

Website: ef5sheltersamarillo.com
7008 E Loop 335 N
Amarillo, TX 79108
Phone: (806) 576-1550
Cell : (806) 670-4774
ef5amashelters@yahoo.com

Ground Zero

Website: www.groundzeroshelters.com
4600 Independence Rd
Perry, OK 73077
Phone: (580) 336-1356
Fax: (580) 336-1356
richard@groundzeroshelters.com

Jarrell Storm Shelters

Website: www.jarrellstormshelters.com
PO Box 529
Jarrell, TX 76537
Phone: (512) 796-0614
Fax: (512) 746-4272
acricher77@yahoo.com

Lone Star Safe Rooms, LLC

Website: www.lonestarsaferooms.com
6801 Exchange Drive
Masnsfield, TX, 76063

lawtonseptictank@yahoo.com

Safe Room Shelters

Website: www.saferoom-shelters.com

700 Omega Street

Henrietta, TX 76365

Phone: (940) 500-2086

Cell: (303) 489-1693

The Turner Co.

Website: theturnerco.com

11049 S Hwy 287

Rhome, TX 76078

Phone: (817) 683-9053

bturner@turnerco.com

U.S. Storm Shelters, LLC

Website: <https://www.usstormshelters.com/>

PO BOX 1324

443 Private Rd. 4215

Decatur, TX 76234

Texas Storm Shelter Guy

Website: <https://texasstormshelterguy.com/>

(903) 582-5214

Main office

80 Hayes Rd.

Sherman, Tx 75090

Phone: (817) 682-7854

Texoma Storm Shelters

Website: <https://texomastormshelters.com/>

500 Ray Road

Holliday, TX 76366

Phone: (940) 636-5253

Matt.Flippin@yahoo.com

Tyler Products Sales, Inc.

Website: www.tylerproductssales.com

PO Box 605

Chandler, TX 75758

Phone: (903) 593-8633

Cell: (903) 360-8760

Southwest Storm Shelters

Website:

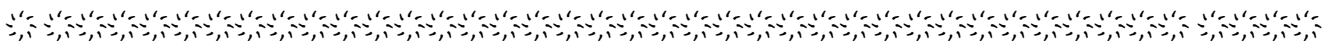
<https://www.southweststormshelters.com/>

(806) 601-2755

southwestdefensellc@gmail.com



ATTACHEMENT #4: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



*Funding for this program made possible by the Texas Division of Emergency Management and
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West Central Texas Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Rebate Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1.1 Q. What is the West Central Texas Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Rebate Program?

A. A program to provide a rebate for purchase and installation of storm shelters for homeowners within the 19 county area of the West Central Texas Council of Governments including the following; Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Fisher, Haskell, Jones, Kent, Knox, Mitchell, Nolan, Runnels, Scurry, Shackelford, Stephens, Stonewall, Taylor, and Throckmorton.

1.2 Q. What does the program offer?

A. The program offers a rebate of 50% of installation costs and fees up to \$3,000 to homeowners who construct a storm shelter in or around their home that meets current FEMA standards.

1.3 Q. How is the rebate program funded?

A. The rebate program is funded through a grant provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) as a result of Texas Covid-19 pandemic (DR-4485-TX).

Storm Shelters

2.1 Q. What is a storm shelter?

A. A storm shelter is a designed and engineered location which provides "near-absolute protection" from extreme wind events such as tornados.

2.2 Q. Am I 100% safe from a tornado while in a storm shelter?

A. To date, a wind event exceeding the maximum design criteria in the FEMA guidance has not been observed; however, such an event may have occurred in the past or may potentially occur in the future. For this reason, the protection provided by storm shelters is called "near-absolute" rather than "absolute". Source: FEMA-361, "Design and Construction Guidance for Community Safe Rooms"; p. 1-2.

2.3 Q. What is the difference between a storm shelter, a safe room, and a place of refuge?

A. For purposes of this program the terms "storm shelter" and "safe room" are interchangeable and refer to an engineered structure that meets FEMA criteria and provides near absolute protection from wind events. A place of refuge, however, is a location that is a place of last resort and provides only limited protection from the effects of an extreme wind event.

2.4 Q. Which is better, an above or below ground storm shelter?

A. That depends on your particular preference and circumstance. Both were found to perform well in testing of wind related events.

2.5 Q. What kind of a storm shelter can I build? Above ground? Below ground? In my garage?

A. Any type of storm shelter may be constructed, so long as it is built to the FEMA P-320, Fourth Edition (Taking Shelter from the Storm), FEMA P-361, Third Edition (Safe Rooms for Tornadoes and Hurricanes), and ICC 500-2014 design standards.

Program Eligibility, Registration and Selection

3.1 Q. Who is eligible for the program?

A. Homeowners, builders or developers with a residential home that meets these requirements:

- Home is in 19 county region of West Central Texas
- Home is not in a FEMA mapped floodplain
- Home older than 45 years approved by Texas Historical Commission prior to installation
- Own the home at the time of rebate award
- Dwellings are limited to occupants on the ground floor of multi-family units

3.2 Q. Who or what properties are NOT eligible for the program?

- A.
- Renters
 - Apartment complexes and other multi-family residences above the ground level
 - Businesses and commercial properties
 - Any residence outside of the 19 counties of West Central Texas Region

3.6 Q. How do I apply for the program?

A. Applications will be accepted via the electronic application page, at www.wctcog.org or by calling (325) 672-8544 ext. 325 for an application.

3.8 Q. Can I mail, email or fax in a registration form instead of submitting it online?

A. Yes

3.9 Q. What are the registration dates?

A. The program will begin accepting applications on February 1st, 2025.

3.12 Q. Does applying on this website mean that I will receive a rebate?

A. No. The application ensures you will be considered for the program, but does not guarantee that you will receive a rebate.

3.13 Q. When will selection of program recipients be made?

A. A date for selection of recipients has not been set; however, selection will likely be made soon after we are notified of available funds for the region.

3.14 Q. How will recipients be selected?

A. Eligible applicants will be placed on a waiting list on a first come first serve basis. Rebates will be awarded in that order.

3.15 Q. Does anyone receive priority in the program?

A. No priority is given outside of the eligibility requirements of the program.

3.17 Q. I didn't get selected. Now what?

A. Those registrants not selected will remain on the waitlist in case additional funding is secured.

Using My Storm Shelter

4.1 Q. Do I need to register my storm shelter with the City?

A. Participation in the rebate program requires applicants to approve to have their storm shelter's GPS coordinates released to first responders (Ex: County Emergency Management Coordinator, Fire Department, Law Enforcement or other first responders)

4.2 Q. Is the storm shelter registry shared with the public?

A. No, we do not publish the storm shelter registry. (However, it is public information that may be requested via the Texas Public Information Act request.)

4.3 Q. Am I required to open my storm shelter to the public?

A. No. This is your shelter you determine who you allow into it.

4.4 Q. What maintenance do I need to do to my storm shelter?

A. In general, keep it clean and inspect it once in a while for proper operation of the door and vents, moisture, rust, etc. Your vendor may have additional information for your specific model and installation.

4.5 Q What should I do or take into the storm shelter with me when weather is threatening?

A. A short list might include:

- a flashlight
- a weather radio and perhaps a commercial broadcast (AM/FM) radio (and understand that reception may be poor due to the location and/or materials in the storm shelter)
- wear boots or other thick-soled shoes - remember, there may be only debris left when you leave the storm shelter
- water and snacks
- essential medicines
- jackets, blankets or other warm gear
- a jack, come-along and chain, or other items that might assist in opening a damaged door.

It is recommended to keep much of this and other items in an "emergency bag" or "go kit". Information and a full checklist of items may be found at www.ready.gov.