



Old Idea Still Works: Storm Shelters Provide Safe Refuge

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INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. -- Recent storms in southern Indiana have heightened awareness of the value of storm shelters among some residents. Near Holton, one family is planning improvements to the storm shelter they installed 25 years ago. Just west of Corydon, a resident is including a shelter in his new home.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) applaud these efforts and encourage residents to consider taking similar steps to reduce their risks of damage from future storms.

In the 25 years since they built their shelter, Don Wood and his family have sought protection through several windstorms and a few tornadoes. Their shelter, which is accessed through a trap door on a deck, has 8-inch-thick walls made of concrete-filled concrete blocks. Improvements the Woods are making now include extending the concrete roof over a part of the stairway and resurfacing the concrete stairs.

Nearby, Jeremy Shireman is incorporating a storm shelter in the basement of his new home, which is under construction. The shelter will occupy the space under the front porch of his home with the concrete floor of the porch serving as the roof of the shelter.

IDHS and FEMA offer several resources for residents interested in reducing their risks of storm losses. Information on the IDHS website includes [tornado safety guidelines](#). Free hazard mitigation publications are available at www.fema.gov or by calling (800) 480-2520. These include Taking Shelter from the Storm and Understanding Your Risks: Identifying Hazards and Estimating Losses.

IDHS and FEMA officials advise residents with storm shelters to notify their local fire departments or other emergency responders about the locations of their storm shelters. That information can be vital in post-disaster recovery efforts, in the event debris covers the access to the shelter.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

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