



## RESIDENTIAL SAFE ROOM FACT SHEET

Safe rooms are designed to provide near-absolute protection for occupants during severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. They can be an interior room, space within a building or an entirely separate structure.

### TYPES

Tornadoes can reach wind speeds up to 250 miles per hour, which classifies the weather event as the deadliest type of windstorm. When choosing which form of same room to install, Hoosiers should choose a product that is able to withstand the highest wind speeds.

- **Stand-alone:** A stand-alone safe room is a building not attached to another building and is designed, constructed or retrofitted to withstand extreme winds and impacts by wind-borne debris.
- **Internal:** An internal safe room is a specifically designed area within or attached to a larger building. It is structurally independent of the larger building, but it provides the same wind and debris protection as a stand-alone safe room.

**Note:** Neither IDHS nor FEMA certifies or recommends specific contractors or products. Companies and people stating that they or their products are certified or approved by IDHS or FEMA are sharing false information.

### SIZES

Safe rooms need to accommodate every person who belongs to a household. FEMA suggests the following to help calculate the necessary size for a safe room:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Multiply:} \\
 \text{the number of bedrooms in the household} \\
 \times \\
 \text{2 people per bedroom} \\
 \times \\
 \text{3 square feet per person}
 \end{array}$$

**Example:** 3 bedrooms  $\times$  2 people per bedroom  $\times$  3 square feet per person = 18 square feet

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Before installing a safe room, homeowners should consider the following:

- What local permits, if any, need to be obtained before construction?
- What local zoning or building restrictions may apply to the location of the safe room?
- Are there any utility easements that could affect the safe room's placement?
- Does my property have a high water table that could cause some types of safe rooms to flood?
- Would the location of an underground safe room affect septic systems or leach lines?
- Would the form and location of the safe room be accessible to every member of the household? Would it be accessible for someone with a disability or access/functional needs?
- Will the depth of bedrock at my location prevent me from installing some types of safe rooms?