# Prepared to Protect

### Week 3: May 18–24

Resilient buildings and disaster plans save lives. Week 3 of Building Safety Month focuses on how smart design, strong codes and community preparedness work together to reduce the impact of disasters. From earthquakes and floods to hurricanes and wildfires, the built environment plays a critical role in protecting people and property.

*Join the Building Safety Month conversation all month long – tag the International Code Council on social media, and use #BuildingSafetyMonth2026 and #BuildingSafety365 to help spread the word!*

## Emergency Planning

Disaster preparedness is a shared responsibility, and when communities plan together, they respond more effectively and recover more quickly. Review these simple, life-saving tips in the resources below, and check out Ready.gov for specific tips on dealing with earthquakes, extreme heat, floods, home fires, hurricanes, tornados, wildfires and more.
Keep it simple:

- Have an emergency kit on hand with basic necessities, and place all items in a sturdy, closed container outside your home where it can be easily located (restock food and water twice a year)
- Establish a “safety destination” (like a friend’s or relative’s house some distance away), plan several different routes to get there so you can drive around roadblocks or hazards and practice your plan
- Long before storm season approaches, prepare your house to withstand the effects of a natural disaster. Called “mitigation”, this can keep natural hazards from having catastrophic impacts.
- You may need to turn off your gas, water and electricity before you evacuate, so each member of the household should learn when and how to do this

## Designing and Retrofitting for Disaster Resilience

Modern building codes paired with modern construction practices (and upgrades to existing buildings) can dramatically improve a structure's ability to withstand natural hazards. These preventative measures help protect occupants, reduce damage, speed recovery and keep communities functioning after disaster strikes.

- **Seismic retrofits** that strengthen foundations and structural connections
- **Flood-resistant design** including elevated utilities, flood vents and water-resistant materials
- **Hurricane-ready features** like impact-rated windows, reinforced roofs and wind-resistant doors
- **Wildfire-resistant construction** using ember-resistant vents, defensible space and non-combustible materials

## Demand Building Safety

Are the homes, schools and buildings in your community built (or retrofitted) to the latest building codes? These codes are crucial in preventing disasters such as structural collapse or fires and mitigating the potential damage caused by events such as hurricanes or floods. Sharing the importance of adopting modern building codes and standards with public officials and encouraging them to take action helps make our communities safer.

- Visit the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH) Inspect to Protect website to find the model code status of your home based on available data (you'll also learn about the potential threats to your home based on community disaster history, and what upgrades may increase your home's resilience)
- Visit ICC's code adoption map and Codes Save to determine if your state or community has adopted up-to-date codes for new construction
- If your state or community hasn't adopted the latest model code, find the names and contact information for the elected officials who represent you and ask for change (include details on why adopting and enforcing modern building codes is important)