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News Release

Mitigation for Homeowners May Reduce Potential Damage in Future Storms

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – Rebuilding after a disaster can present opportunities as well as challenges for homeowners. This is certainly true for survivors of Hurricane Sally.

The challenges include getting the job done quickly and efficiently. The opportunities involve rebuilding stronger, smarter, safer and better, with more resilience. The process is called mitigation.

Mitigation reduces the risk to property from future events. While it may involve a larger initial investment, mitigation pays off in the long run. In fact, FEMA estimates that on average, for every **\$1** spent on mitigation, **\$6** are saved from future losses.

“We want survivors to plan for the future, to ensure their homes and communities are stronger when the next storm hits,” said Allan Jarvis, FEMA’s Federal Coordinating Officer in Alabama.

FEMA has a checklist to help Hurricane Sally survivors rebuild so their homes are protected in future storms:

- **Know your risk.** Review local flood maps to understand your property’s flood risk. <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps>
- **Develop a plan.** Things to consider:
 - Elevate or flood-proof your washer, dryer, water heater and HVAC systems. If possible, move these appliances out of your basement to the second floor.
 - Relocate electrical outlets to three feet above the floor.
 - Install exterior floodwalls to protect window wells or stairs against low-level flooding.

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- Install a backflow valve in the sewer line and flood vents in foundation walls, garages, and other enclosed areas.
- Seal your basement walls with waterproofing compounds.
- If you have a gable-end roof, add bracings to reinforce the roof. Consider fastening the roof to the walls with hurricane straps.
- **Finalize your plan.** There are a wide range of options for protecting your home from flood and wind events through mitigation. Be sure to consult with a licensed contractor and the local building department before making any structural changes to understand requirements and obtain any necessary permits.
- **Contact your local building official** before rebuilding/renovating/retrofitting. Make sure your plans meet local and state government requirements. Get proper permits.
- **Be smart when you start.** Use reliable, licensed contractors. Get a written estimate. Check references. Pay by check.
- **Get insurance.** Anywhere it rains, it can flood. Protect your investment in your home by purchasing flood insurance, even if you do not live in a high-risk flood zone. FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) helps cover costly losses associated with flooding. For more information, Visit <https://www.floodsmart.gov>.

FEMA provides grant funding for certain kinds of mitigation projects under the **Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program**. For more information, and how to apply for the program, visit <https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/hazard-mitigation/individuals>.

Alabama residents with homes affected by Hurricane Sally last month, can talk to a FEMA Mitigation Specialist for help in making repairs. These specialists are available to provide rebuilding tips, questions about home repair, the importance of flood insurance, making disaster plans, and building supplies.

Get helpful advice from a specialist on the FEMA Mitigation Helpline at **866-579-0820, Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Central Time**. Specialists are also available by email at FEMA-MitOutreach-4559@fema.dhs.gov.

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