



Multihazard Mitigation Council



Each year, natural disasters injure and kill people in communities across the nation. Natural disasters cause tremendous damage to property. They disrupt families, businesses and government operations. They also cause government agencies to incur significant expenses for disaster assistance and emergency services. The Multihazard Mitigation Council (MMC) works to reduce the total consequences and costs associated with natural and man-made hazards to buildings and infrastructure by serving as a focal point for the dissemination and promotion of credible information and counsel on major policy issues involving all-hazard disaster resilience and risk mitigation.

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MMC has worked to reduce losses from hazard events since it was established in 1997 as a voluntary advisory body of the National Institute of Building Sciences.

Future Savings from Mitigation Activities

In 2005, MMC conducted an independent study for Congress funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The resulting report, *Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: An Independent Study to Assess the Future Savings from Mitigation Activities*, documents the study's conclusion—that every dollar spent on mitigation saves four dollars in avoided future losses.

Since its release, government agencies, private sector entities and the media have widely cited the report. MMC representatives continue to inform congressional staffs, federal agencies and professional groups about the study. Based on the study, the MMC Board made three key recommendations. First, the cost-effectiveness of mitigation warrants ongoing federal funding, both pre-disaster and during recovery. Programs should include code enforcement, land use and zoning regulation, and planning to limit damage and maintain utility and transportation lifelines. Second, mitigation strategies should be employed on a comprehensive, community-wide, long-term basis. Lastly, analysis of mitigation effectiveness helps build resilient communities. Data collection and assessment are needed to inform public policy and improve design and construction practices.

A New Role

In the six years since the *Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves* study was published, the building community mitigation landscape has changed. It is in this context that the MMC has been reconstituted with a new mission and broader membership base. The new MMC will be a focal point for the dissemination of credible information and counsel on major policy issues involving multihazard disaster resilience. It will promote increased all-hazard (man-caused and natural) disaster resilience in homes and commercial buildings as part of a whole-building strategy that incorporates sustainability, security and use of GIS and other technological tools. This expansive approach will be directed to homeowners, businesses, schools, communities, public and private sector building portfolio managers and many others.

The MMC will prepare publications including white papers on disaster resilience policy and a compendium of loss reduction strategies that are integrated with sustainability and security. A free semi-annual *Journal of Hazard Mitigation and Risk Assessment* (JHAZ) debuted in March 2011 and will continue to be published under the sponsorship of the MMC, with members among the article writers and reviewers.

Membership in the updated MMC is voluntary and open to public and private sector architects, engineers, contractors and risk assessment practitioners, as well as trade and professional associations, materials interests and others from communities across the United States. The Council will provide a forum for disaster professionals to exchange valuable information on emerging trends in building technology and federal policy and to address building systems and software applications that play a critical role in disaster resilience and sustainability.

Today, the MMC remains focused on decreasing the nation's losses from natural and man-caused disaster events while also promoting community preparedness, sustainability and resilience, and working to achieve other national goals related to such priorities as energy efficiency. ■



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