

Building and Codes Department

Memorandum

Date: 4/26/2006
To: All Interested Parties
From: Steve Mills
RE: Storm Shelter Policy

Following the tornado of April 7, 2006 the City of Hendersonville received numerous questions and inquiries regarding our policy with regards to private storm shelters and safe rooms. The following is our current policy for the construction, design and performance of storm shelters and safe rooms:

- All storm shelters and safe rooms are to comply with the National Storm Shelter Association Standard for the Design, Construction, and Performance of Storm Shelters, dated April 12, 2001. For site built storm shelters an engineer may be needed to certify a shelter meets or exceeds the design, construction and performance criteria of the standard.
- All storm shelters, whether above or below ground, must comply with applicable provisions of the Hendersonville Zoning Ordinance 1985-8. Underground shelters must specifically comply with Section 3-306.3.
- Safe rooms must comply with all applicable criteria in the International Residential Code, National Electrical Code as well as NSSA's Storm Shelter Standard.
- Storm shelters are not considered to be habitable space, whether located above or below ground. Safe rooms are considered habitable space.
- Permits will not be required for any underground storm shelter, regardless of its size. Above ground storm shelters not exceeding 200 square feet in area will not be required to obtain a building permit. All safe rooms will be required to obtain a building permit.

These provisions are not designed to unduly restrict those individuals who have chosen to protect their life safety in the event of another severe storm occurrence. They are intended rather to insure that each property owner is provided with an adequately designed and constructed storm shelter or safe room that will truly protect them when the time comes. Compliance with these standards can insure the owner has the best opportunity to be considered for a grant through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. If there are additional questions I can be contacted at (615) 822-3802 or smills@hvilletn.org.