



FEMA

Below Ground Storm Shelter Shelter Protects Family and Neighbors

Oklahoma City, OK - Twenty-seven years ago, Mr. Price had a below ground storm shelter installed in the backyard of his family's Oklahoma home. Severe storms and tornadoes frequent the area and are a cause of great anxiety for the residents. Severe injury and death as a result of wind whipped debris are not uncommon.

The shelter is 12 feet by 16 feet complete with lighting for the stairway and ventilation. The total cost was \$1,800. Inside the shelter, a cabinet was installed where preparedness supplies are kept. Items include a battery powered radio, water, personal hygiene supplies and prescription medications as well as irreplaceable family valuables. Additionally, Mrs. Price keeps a large suitcase packed with blankets and extra clothing. Because the shelter is located below a large tree, it is registered with the fire and police department in the event the tree is blown over during a storm. "We use the shelter every time it gets bad," states Mrs. Price. "We gather up family members, neighbors; it is open for anybody. One time we had thirty-eight people, two ducks and three dogs!"

On May 9, 2003, Mrs. Price heard about the approaching storm on TV; a tornado watch was in effect. A television reporter was interviewing a new neighbor and she asked where a shelter was. She was told, "Go to Grandma's house" and found her way to the Price shelter.

Mrs. Price described the sounds of the storm as a lot of noise like rocks hitting the door of the shelter and a loud roar. After the storm when they opened the door, debris had blocked visibility to the house, the power poles were all down and the air felt very heavy. There was some roof and window damage to the Price home, estimated at \$11,000, and the car was damaged. Insurance coverage will reimburse for most of the damages. "Fifteen people walked out of the shelter without a scratch. I don't have one thing in this house worth a life," states Mrs. Price. "I feel safe in the shelter."



Oklahoma County,
Oklahoma



Quick Facts

Sector:

Private

Cost:

\$1,800.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Safe Rooms/Community Shelters

Primary Funding:

Private funds