



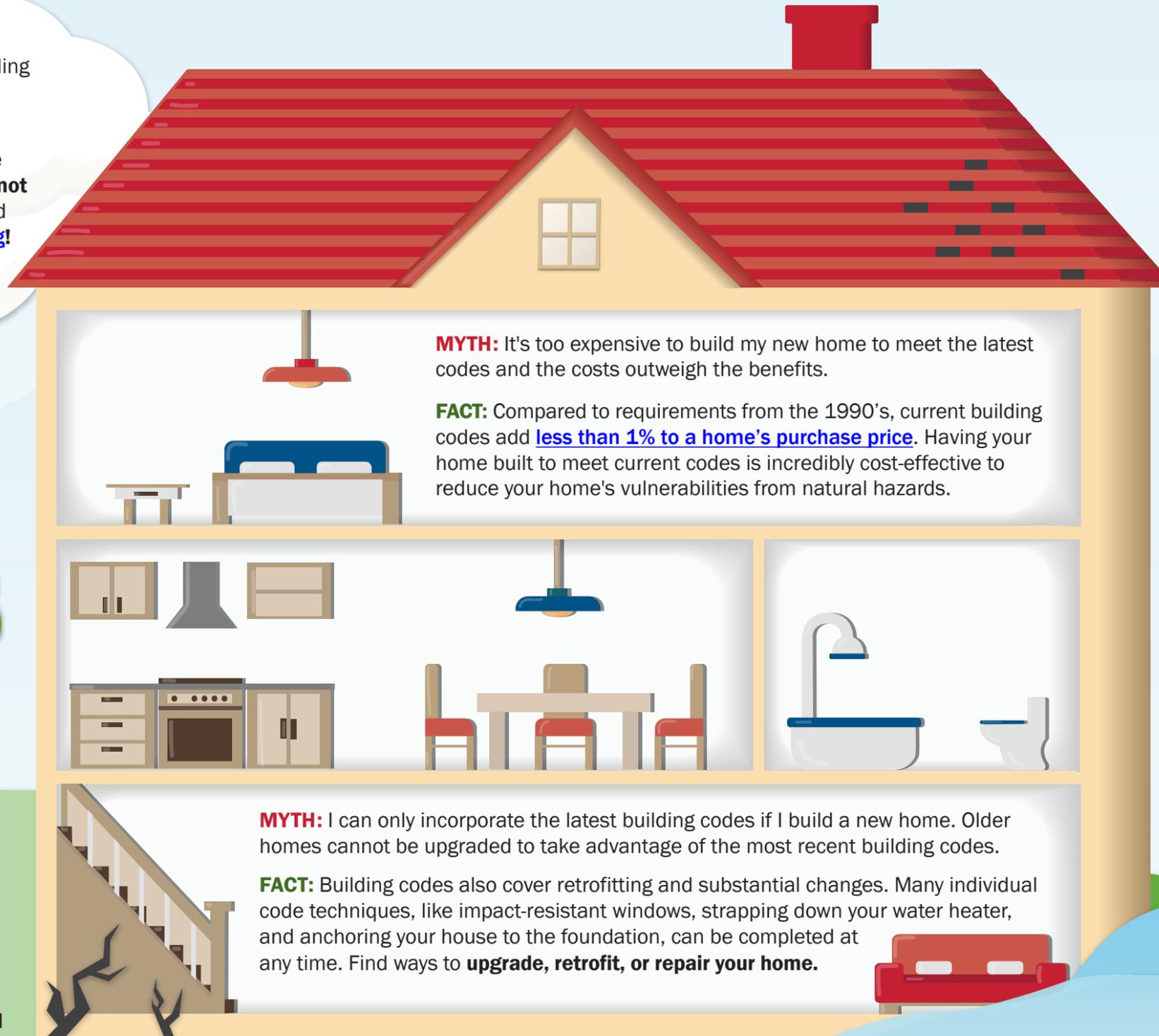
FEMA

MYTH BUSTERS: HOMEOWNER EDITION

We spend 87% of our time inside. Buildings grant us warmth, security, and a place to prosper. Wouldn't you be alarmed to know that most buildings in the United States are not built to a level that will protect you from extreme hazards? All too often, building owners assume that their property is natural hazard-resistant, and automatically safe when they're not. Codes must be adopted and enforced but are still just minimum requirements. Keep reading and find out the facts behind some of the more common myths surrounding building codes.

MYTH: I don't need to worry about building codes, someone in my community does that for me.

FACT: The vast majority of hazard-prone communities in the United States have **not adopted the latest building codes**. Find out if yours does at inspecttoprotect.org!



MYTH: It's too expensive to build my new home to meet the latest codes and the costs outweigh the benefits.

FACT: Compared to requirements from the 1990's, current building codes add **less than 1% to a home's purchase price**. Having your home built to meet current codes is incredibly cost-effective to reduce your home's vulnerabilities from natural hazards.

MYTH: I've heard bathrooms provide protection during tornadoes.

FACT: A storm shelter or safe room is the **only place** designed and constructed to protect people during extreme wind events, such as hurricanes and tornadoes. Visit fema.gov/safe-rooms to find out more.

MYTH: I don't live somewhere like California and don't need to worry about earthquake damage.

FACT: Certain areas are more prone to earthquake risk than others, but earthquakes can still occur on previously unidentified faults. **Earthquakes don't kill people; buildings do.** Codes help buildings resist seismic forces during earthquakes.

MYTH: I can only incorporate the latest building codes if I build a new home. Older homes cannot be upgraded to take advantage of the most recent building codes.

FACT: Building codes also cover retrofitting and substantial changes. Many individual code techniques, like impact-resistant windows, strapping down your water heater, and anchoring your house to the foundation, can be completed at any time. Find ways to **upgrade, retrofit, or repair your home**.

MYTH: The benefits of elevating my home do not justify the cost of elevating my home. I'm never going to see a return on investment.

FACT: Just a 1.2% cost increase on average on new construction can raise the ground floor of your home to withstand most floods and avoid major costs in property damage. In addition, [NIBS' 2019 Mitigation Saves](#) found that **making flood retrofits to your home saves \$6 for every \$1 spent**.