

URBAN FIRE AND EXPLOSION

DEFINITION – An urban fire involves a structure or property within an urban or developed area. For hazard mitigation purposes, major urban fires involving large buildings and/or multiple properties are of primary concern. The effects of a major urban fire include minor to significant property damage, loss of life, and residential or business displacement. Explosions are extremely rapid releases of energy that usually generate high temperatures and often lead to fires. The risk of severe explosions can be reduced through careful management of flammable and explosive hazardous materials. (FEMA, 1997).



MITIGATION ACTIONS FOR RESIDENTS

- ▶ **Personal Preparedness** – It is important to plan for disasters. Families may not be together or at home. Consider completing the following to be prepared.
 - **Family Emergency Communication Plan** (FEMA) serves as a comprehensive checklist for household disaster preparedness. [FEMA Family Emergency Communication Plan Checklist](#)
 - **Family Disaster Plan** (American Red Cross) – Communication networks and electricity could be disrupted. Planning in advance will help ensure that all the members of your household know how to reach each other and where to meet up in an emergency. [American Red Cross Family Disaster Plan Template](#)
 - **Emergency Kits** – It is always a good idea to have an emergency kit on hand. Consider basic items as well as special needs.
 Build a Kit (Ready.gov) [ready.gov Build-a-Kit](#)
 Survival Kit Supplies (American Red Cross) [American Red Cross Survival Kit Supplies Checklist](#)
 - **The American Red Cross recommends the following for mitigating urban fires:**
 - Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.
 - Test smoke alarms every month. If they're not working, change the batteries.
 - Talk with all family members about a [fire escape plan](#) and practice the plan twice a year.
 - If a fire occurs in your home, **GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL FOR HELP**. Never go back inside for anything or anyone.
 - Keep items that can catch on fire at least three feet away from anything that gets hot, such as space heaters.
 - Never smoke in bed.
 - Talk to children regularly about the dangers of fire, matches and lighters and keep them out of reach.
 - Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep.

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- Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or broiling food.
 - If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
 - Stay in the home while simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food. Check it regularly and use a timer to remind you that food is cooking.
 - Keep anything that can catch fire—like pot holders, towels, plastic and clothing— away from the stove.
 - Keep pets off cooking surfaces and countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.
- ▶ **Emergency Alerts and Warnings** – To receive emergency alerts and warnings, refer to the following websites, mobile apps, and other resources.
- **American Red Cross Mobile Apps** (Apple App Store, Google Play, or text to “90999”
[Mobile Apps - The American Red Cross](#)
 - **South Central Alert** – This service allows residents and businesses in an eight county area to be notified of an emergency situation and important alert messages in a variety of ways, including on their cell phones, home and work phones, by text messaging and e-mail.
[South Central Alert - Sign Up](#)
 - Monitor police news feeds, weather, and news on social media or websites. Receiving periodic updates is vital.



MITIGATION ACTIONS FOR MUNICIPALITIES

- ▶ **Adopt the York County Hazard Mitigation Plan** by resolution or develop and implement a municipal hazard mitigation plan. [York County Hazard Mitigation Plan](#)
- ▶ **Prepare a Continuity of Operations Plan** to ensure that essential functions continue to be performed under a broad range of circumstances, protecting residents and minimizing business interruption. Consider what capital improvements are needed to adequately protect business or properties. [FEMA Continuity of Operations Brochure](#)
- ▶ **Prepare an Emergency Operations Plan** which describe who will do what, as well as when, with what resources, and by what authority – before, during, and immediately after an emergency. [FEMA Guide for All Hazards Emergency Operations Planning Guide](#)
- ▶ **Coordination** – Develop pre-disaster Memorandums of Agreements or Memorandum of Understanding with adjacent jurisdictions. Build partnerships (neighborhoods, emergency management/first responders, businesses, utility service providers, and local government agencies to strengthen response and recovery.

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- ▶ **Public Education and Outreach** – Educate residents regarding risk and impact of hazards, how to prepare and protect themselves and their property. Facilitate funding for mitigation measures and technical assistance programs that address measures that citizens can take.
- ▶ **Building Codes** – The probability of future occurrences of fire can be reduced through the creation, implementation, and enforcement of building codes that address fire prevention, detection, and extinguishment.