



Preparation for disasters, both natural and man-made, is essential for the protection of your building. This is particularly true of historic resources, which often consist of unique and often irreplaceable building materials and craftsmanship. The following is a guide to aid property owners in choosing appropriate stabilization and repairs for their historic buildings in case of a disaster and to guide them through the review process by the Independence Heritage Commission.

What does it mean to be historically designated?

Historic properties are distinct areas or sites that are linked through architectural or historical significance characterized by buildings, structures, and landscape features. These resource(s) may be high style (grand) or vernacular (simple), residential or commercial, individual or linked as a district.

Properties that are determined to be architecturally and/or historically significant may be designated as one of the following:

- Landmarks (individual properties)
- Historic Districts (contiguous areas of unique historical/architectural character and development)

How do I know if my property is designated historic?

The City currently has one locally designated historic district, the Truman Heritage District, which is located northwest of the Independence Courthouse Square. Additionally, there are 24 Independence properties that have been designated as local Historic Landmarks that are located throughout the city. If your property is located within the Truman Heritage District or is one of the individually listed sites (see attached map and list) your property is considered a historically designated property and may require review by Staff or the Heritage Commission for exterior improvements to your property. *Note: Properties that are not “designated” may also be considered historic based upon their age, history, and architectural significance. If you think you own a historic property and are concerned about maintaining its architectural and historical integrity, contact the Historic Preservation Division for information concerning exterior improvements and repairs.*

What is the Independence Heritage Commission?

The Heritage Commission was established to serve the public as a steward for the city's historic properties and districts. The Commission provides assistance to property owners and aids in the implementation of appropriate exterior modifications for historic resources. The Commission does not review interior modifications or control regular property maintenance.

What am I permitted to do to my building after a disaster? Am I required to go before the Heritage Commission for repairs to my building?

The Commission always permits basic repairs and routine maintenance for a historic property owner without review and approval; however, a building permit may be required. Any major repairs must be done in-kind, meaning that replacement of any major components of your building must be done with the same materials that existed prior to the disaster. In-kind repairs may be completed without Staff or Commission approval.

Any type of demolition to any part of a designated building or accessory structure requires Commission approval prior to any action (unless it is deemed structurally unsound and a public health hazard by the City's Code Enforcement Department or the Chief Building Official). In an instance where a building has been so severely damaged that rehabilitation is necessary, the owner is permitted to stabilize his/her property without Staff or Commission approval, however approval must be obtained by Preservation Division Staff (administratively) or the Heritage Commission prior to commencement of any exterior modifications.

How will I know what type of work is appropriate for my historic property?

City design guidelines and National Park Service Preservation Briefs are available for designated sites/districts to aid property owners in planning for exterior improvements. Contact the City's Preservation Staff or go on-line at: http://www.ci.independence.mo.us/comdev/HP_DesignGuidelines.stm or <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm> for a copy. Property owners are encouraged to utilize on-line resources as well as technical assistance provided by Staff as an integral part of their emergency preparedness plan.

<p>Any reference to work that does or does not require Heritage Commission approval does not reflect the requirements for the Building Division Permit Application Process. Contact the Building Division at (816) 325-7401 before the threat of an emergency for information regarding work that may require a building permit.</p>

BEFORE THE THREAT



Document your property (if not previously completed) through photographs, video, and a written inventory. This should include documenting important or rare building materials and architectural details. Be certain to update this information on a regular basis and store in a fireproof location. Copies of this information, including insurance policies and other important papers, should also be kept in a separate location and available for ready access.

Contact your insurance company and make certain that your policy covers historic resources and man-made emergencies.

Check that all doors and windows (points of egress) are operable. Due to the age of many historic buildings, there is a good chance that some doors and windows are inoperable. Often times openings are painted shut, have broken counter weights or settlement of foundations have caused doors and windows to stick. Please check all means of egress to ensure that they are functional. They may be the only means to escape during an emergency.

Install/check existing Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors. It is very important to install CO detectors in older buildings as heating systems can malfunction causing CO to leak into your building. CO detectors can also aid in case of a fire. Many historical buildings were designed with large areas and high ceilings. During a fire these areas can suffer from stratification or layering (a build up of heat causing a thermal barrier), which prevents smoke reaching a smoke detector at the ceiling, or the smoke may cool before it ever reaches the ceiling and the smoke detector may never be activated. Activation of a CO detector can happen in the very early stages of a fire where CO is produced, providing time to safely evacuate individuals and execute an effective and rapid firefighting response.

Review your plan to secure your property and make certain that others (such as a neighbor or friend) are aware of your disaster plan in case of an emergency or when out of town.

Contact the Fire Department to list your property as a historic site. It is possible that during an emergency, measures can be taken to minimize damage to your building if the emergency crew is aware of the property's historic status. Additionally, ensure that your house numbers are posted, legible, and visible from the street or road fronting the property. The address numbers should contrast with their background for optimal visibility.

Consult with an architect, engineer or contractor with historic building expertise to assist you in evaluating your property, if necessary. Many older buildings can have multiple utility services and older wiring and construction techniques. Contemporary safety measures such as fire walls and fire stops may not have been incorporated into the building's original design elements. Further, many historic buildings consist of wood framing. A fire in a wood frame building therefore, can rapidly spread and cause severe damage in minimal time. Supplying this type of specialized information to your local fire department can be very helpful should a fire rescue response to your property be necessary.

Install/check existing fire extinguisher. When used properly, a portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the Fire Department arrives. Fire extinguishers are rated according to the amount of fire that can be extinguished by an untrained person. The minimum fire extinguisher rating for most occupancies is 2-A:10-B:C. The 2-A means that the extinguisher will extinguish as much fire as a 2-1/2 gallon water extinguisher on ordinary combustibles (about as much as a trash can would hold). The 10-B relates to the amount of fire involving flammable liquids, usually ten square feet. The C means that the extinguisher's agent is non-conductive. Be sure to install a size appropriate fire extinguisher in your building and review operating procedures with family and associates. Extinguishers should also be checked regularly to ensure optimal service.

Make any necessary repairs of historic building fabric, fencing, or landscaping that may be loose, rotted, or unstable. Such features could become detached and develop into dangerous debris that might damage other parts of your building or your neighbor's property. Pay particular attention to roofing and openings such as entry and overhead doors and windows as they are the most vulnerable features of your building.

Install/check existing smoke detectors. The placement of smoke detectors in historic buildings is often dictated by the overwhelming desire of many owners to keep the original look of the interior by concealing smoke detectors from the view of the public. Such placement can result in a very slow response from the detectors in the early stage of the fire. In fact, high ceilings and low air movement in many of these buildings make proper placement of smoke detectors vital. Check with your local Fire Department if you have any questions about installation of smoke detectors in your home or business. Once detectors are properly installed, be certain to regularly check that they are in working order, whether battery run or hard wired.

AFTER THE THREAT



Evaluate the damage. Once your area has been given clearance to return outdoors (upon removal of power lines,

large debris, etc.), evaluate the damage done to your historic resource.

Ensure that the building is structurally stable for you and your family or associates to return.

Document damaged building material and missing features. Again, video and photo documentation is critical as well as written inventory before and after an emergency. This documentation is essential for insurance and disaster relief funding sources that may be available immediately after the threat.

Make necessary repairs to stabilize your property. Refer to the section above for what is appropriate with and without Staff or Commission approval.

Contact the City's Historic Preservation Division for aid in determining appropriate methods of repair, rehabilitation, and treatments for the exterior of your historic building or property.

For further information regarding preparation of your historic resources contact:

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or go to our website at:

<https://www.ci.independence.mo.us/comdev/historicPreservation.stm> for
up-to-date preservation information.