

How to engage an architect in disaster assistance

Hazardous events cause billions of dollars in damage each year. As professionals and volunteers, architects can use their unique and vital skills to improve preparedness and enhance response efforts. When able to work alongside state and local authorities, architects can conduct habitability assessments of homes and businesses, plan for hazardous events, and promote building code adoption and enforcement.

For decades, The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has maintained a robust nationwide Disaster Assistance Program with thousands of architects trained to keep communities safer and less vulnerable—before and after a disaster. AIA Architects promote and serve the public interest in their personal and professional activities.*

AIA's Disaster Assistance Handbook details some of the ways architects can collaborate with emergency managers, building departments, and state and local officials to keep our communities safe. Architects engage in volunteer response and recovery efforts (no fee associated), and professional services to regain functionality more effectively and efficiently. Access the Disaster Assistance Handbook at aia.org/DisasterAssistanceHandbook.



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Did you know: 40% of businesses never reopen after a disaster according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

TRAIN

Lead routine Safety Assessment Program (SAP) trainings to ensure building officials, architects, and engineers are ready to perform post-disaster assessments before a disaster or a hazard scenario exercise. See [page 58](#).

COLLABORATE

Work with community stakeholders to advocate for building codes, hazard mitigation strategies, and land use practices that enhance community health, safety, and resilience. See [chapter 2](#).

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

CONSULT

Work with emergency planners, engineers, and local leaders on hazard scenario planning, table top, and recovery exercises.

SCREEN

Conduct pre-disaster screening and vulnerability assessments of infrastructure, buildings, and processes to identify specific risks and prioritize improvements.

DISASTER RESPONSE

Did you know: 5,000 structures evaluated by design professionals in the five days following the 2011 Tuscaloosa Tornado.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

EVALUATE

Perform rapid safety assessments of buildings and homes, reducing the strain on government, NGOs, and supplemental resources. See [page 75](#).

EDUCATE

Educate building inspectors, facility managers, and design professionals in the SAP and Applied Technology Council (ATC) methodology to quickly teach personnel and volunteers to perform building evaluations after a disaster. See case study on [page 78](#).

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

ASSESS

Complete detailed post-disaster building assessments to establish a scope for repairs, reconstruction, or retrofitting.

ADVISE

Provide technical design assistance on repair and rebuilding decisions.

Learn more about how architects provide disaster assistance, reduce risk and create resilient communities at aia.org/resilience.

* AIA Code of Ethics, Canon II