

McDonald Hughes Community Safe Room Frequently Asked Questions

Purpose: The McDonald Hughes Community Safe Room is primarily intended to provide a safe haven when dangerous weather conditions are imminent and for only a short period of time. Secondly, it features recreational aspects that may be utilized on a daily basis.

What is a Safe Room?

A safe room is a hardened structure specifically designed to meet the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) criteria and provide near-absolute protection in extreme weather events, including tornadoes and hurricanes. Near-absolute protection means that, based on our current knowledge of tornadoes and hurricanes, the occupants of a safe room built in accordance with FEMA guidance will have a very high probability of being protected from injury or death.

During Safe Room Activation

When will the safe room be open/activated?

Staff will make preparations to open the safe room during a tornado watch. The TPD, by order of local Incident Command, will activate the safe room during a warning.

Do I have to have ID with me to enter?

No, but we will record the number of people entering the building.

What can a person bring with them to the safe room?

You can bring games, prescription medicines, flash lights

Are firearms allowed?

No weapons are allowed inside the facility.

What is the Smoking Policy? No smoking is allowed.

Can I bring medications with me?

No drugs other than those prescribed by the individual's physician for their use are allowed.

No alcohol is allowed while the safe room is activated. However rentals and events follow typical PARA rental procedures.

Can I bring my pets?

If space is available, the pet may enter the safe room with its owner under the following conditions:

1. Pet owners must be present with their animal.
2. Pets must be under the complete control of the owner at all times.
3. Only domestic animals are permitted.
4. Animals over 140lbs are not permitted.

5. Reptiles, fish and insects are not permitted.
6. Dogs should be in a crate or leashed and muzzled. All other animals must be in a crate.
7. Animals will be excluded from the safe room if they exhibit dangerous or disruptive behavior, or are otherwise believed to present a hazard.
8. Pet owners should bring a bowl for water.
9. Pet owners must clean up after their pet.
10. Animals should be vaccinated as appropriate. For safety reasons, those persons violating these rules may be asked to leave.

All service dogs accompanying individuals with disabilities are welcomed in all campus safe rooms. If the owner is unable because of a disability to use a muzzle, harness, leash, or other tether for his/her service dog, or if the use of a muzzle, harness, leash or other tether would interfere with the service dog's performance of work or tasks, then the service dog must be otherwise under the owner's control (e.g., voice commands, signals, or other effective means).

What is provided in the safe room?

Fountains are available for drinking water, restrooms and bleacher type seating is available.

Will I be able to charge my phone, tablets, devices?

Yes, however this is limited and available on a first come, first served basis.

Is Wi-Fi available in the safe room?

There is no Wi-Fi is available.

How long can a person stay at the safe room?

The MHCSF is activated as a safe room during a tornado warning. At the conclusion and all clear, the safe room will close.

What about personal safety inside the safe room?

A TPD officer will be on duty during the safe room activation.

What about First Aid?

Basic First Aid is available

Who is in charge during the safe room activation?

When the MHCSR is activated for a tornado watch or warning, PARA officials and TPD operate and staff the safe room. For your safety and the safety of others, please follow the guidance of these officials while you are inside the safe room.

How will you know what is going on outside?

A weather radio is available inside the safe room and TPD will have communication with local Incident Command and EMA.

Is a TV available?

A TV is not available but you are welcome to use a digital device.

How will I know when it's safe to return home?

TPD and staff will be in touch with local EMA and incident command personnel during the activation. They will close the safe room when the all clear is given.

What if I change my mind and need to go home after doors are closed?

When weather conditions become unsafe the building will be locked-down, with all doors closed and sealed as appropriate. Once sealed, opening the doors will void safe room protection, and should therefore remain closed until all clear is given. Residents should be in the safe area of the building and remain there until weather has passed over. No one will be allowed to leave during this time period. The weather will be monitored and a notification provided when the weather system has passed and it is safe to begin to demobilize/leave the safe room.

Where do I park? How many parking places are available?

Parking is available onsite with 242 places at the MHCSR and the adjacent Hughes Center.

What if the power goes out inside the safe room?

The facility is equipped with an emergency lighting Inverter System or battery backup for emergency lighting.

Operations During a Typical Day

1. When are tours of the safe room available?

Tour hours are consistent with Hughes Center hours of operation: 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday –Friday and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday. You may call 205-562-3215 to schedule a tour in advance. Tours are not available during safe room activation.

2. Where do you enter to play basketball?

Please check in at the control desk located at the main entrance of the Hughes Center.

3. What does it cost?

The basketball courts are available for use with the same pricing as the Hughes Center. The membership rate at the Hughes Center is \$179 per year for an individual and the daily user fee is \$7 per day.

4. Are basketballs available for use?

Yes. You can check out at the control desk.

5. **What are the hours for basketball play?**

Hours are consistent with Hughes Center hours of operation: 8 a.m.-8p.m. Monday –Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday and closed on Sunday

6. **Can I reserve a basketball court?**

Yes, please contact the Hughes Center for reservations 205-562-3220.

7. **Can I reserve the safe room for a family reunion? Or other special event?**

Yes, please call the Hughes Center 205-562-3215 for more information. Please note that all reservations are subject to “use at your own risk”. In the event of a weather event and safe room activation, the reservation or event will be cancelled.

###