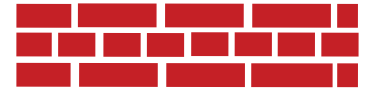




UNREINFORCED MASONRY (URM) BUILDINGS



Frequently Asked Questions



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What is a URM?

URM stands for unreinforced masonry building. URMs are often brick buildings constructed before 1960 lacking the steel reinforcement and structural connections necessary to withstand an earthquake. The Portland Bureau of Development Services (BDS) estimates Portland has over 1,800 URM structures based on a survey completed in 1995. A survey of these buildings completed in 2016 shows that over 80% of these URMs have not been seismically upgraded and are vulnerable in the event of an earthquake.

How do I know if the building I own, rent, or do business in is a URM?

There is a list of potential URMs from a 1995 survey that was updated in 2016 on the BDS website www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/urms. If your building's address is on the list and you do not agree with the URM designation, you can provide information to BDS to reconsider the designation. Please contact **503-823-7300** or BDS.URMBuildings@portlandoregon.gov.

If I own a URM, what should I do?

Currently there are no retroactive requirements to seismically strengthen your entire building. However, if you do decide on a major renovation, to re-occupy a vacant building, or change the use or occupancy of your building, Portland City Code may require you to comply with seismic regulations. For more information, please see the following: www.portlandoregon.gov/citycode/28673.

Why require the retrofit of URMs?

URMs pose a danger to public safety during an earthquake. Numerous examples from around the U.S. and elsewhere in the world show URMs are likely to partially or completely collapse when the ground starts shaking. When they collapse, these buildings harm residents and people in the surrounding area.

URMs are also part of the historic and cultural character of many Portland neighborhoods. Some are designated as historic structures. Retrofitting these buildings helps ensure some will remain following a quake.

Retrofitting doesn't guarantee a building can be occupied following an earthquake, but in some cases – especially smaller quakes – residents and businesses are able to quickly reoccupy the space. This adds to Portland's resilience as a community.

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What is Portland doing to retrofit URMs?

The City of Portland wants to require retrofits to improve your safety during an earthquake and to protect our historic buildings posed by URMs, the City of Portland launched the URM Seismic Retrofit Project in May 2014 to develop a policy to require the mandatory retrofit of all URMs in the city, and develop methods to assist building owners implement the policy. The project is led by the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, Portland Bureau of Development Services, and Portland Development Commission with leadership from Commissioner Novick's office and stakeholders from the community.

Building owners, tenants, and others interested in this project are encouraged to attend public forums scheduled this summer. For more information, visit www.portlandoregon.gov/pbem/urmproject.

A final proposal is expected for City Council to consider later this year

How can I get information on the URM Seismic Retrofit Project?

The best way to keep informed is to visit the project website at www.portlandoregon.gov/pbem/urmproject. You can also contact URMS@portlandoregon.gov to receive email updates about the project.

How can I be involved?

All meetings of the URM Seismic Retrofit Project are open to the public. The public is specifically invited to attend community forums on July 14th from 6-8pm at the (To Be Determined).

If you have specific comments about the proposed policy, you can email them directly to URMS@portlandoregon.gov.