



Natural Hazard Mitigation: Recasting Disaster Policy And Planning

David Godschalk, Timothy Beatley, Philip Berke, David Brower, Edward J. Kaiser

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The first half of the 1990s saw the largest and most costly floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes in the history of the United States. While natural hazards cannot be prevented, their human impacts can be greatly reduced through advance action that mitigates risks and reduces vulnerability. *Natural Hazard Mitigation* describes and analyzes the way that hazard mitigation has been carried out in the U.S. under our national disaster law, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. It is the first systematic study of the complete intergovernmental system for natural hazard mitigation, including its major elements and the linkages among them. The book: analyzes the effectiveness of the Stafford Act and investigates what is contained in state hazard mitigation plans required by the Act studies how federal hazard mitigation funds have been spent explores what goes into decision making following a major disaster looks at how government mitigation officials rate the effectiveness of the mitigation system suggests changes that could help solve the widely recognized problems with current methods of coping with disasters. Damages from natural disasters are reaching catastrophic proportions, making natural hazard mitigation an important national policy issue. The findings and recommendations presented in this volume should help to strengthen natural hazard mitigation policy and practice, thereby serving to reduce drains on the federal treasury that pay for preventable recovery and relief costs, and to spare residents in areas hit by natural disasters undue suffering and expense. It is an informative and eye-opening study for planners, policymakers, students of planning and geography, and professionals working for government agencies that deal with natural hazards.

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