

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Protecting Homes From Hurricanes

(NAPSA)—In a battle between homeowners and hurricanes, who would win? Americans residing along the South and East Coasts may find out during the 2007 hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30.

While the relative calm of last year brought a total of five hurricanes to the United States, this year may see 17 tropical storms, of which nine could strengthen into hurricanes with winds of at least 74 miles per hour, according to forecaster Tropical Storm Risk.

The National Hurricane Center for the National Weather Service (NWS)—the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings in the United States—says homeowners should be informed and prepared. The NWS recommends homeowners verify that their homes meet current building code requirements for high winds, one of the many components associated with vicious Category 3 hurricanes and above. NWS says structures built to meet or exceed current building code high-wind provisions have a much better chance of surviving violent windstorms.

Stronger Homes

Homeowners can strengthen the exterior of their homes to prevent wind from entering and tearing large openings through better choices in the new construction phase. According to tests performed at Texas Tech University, walls built with insulated concrete forms (ICFs)—hollow foam forms or panels used to hold concrete in place—are less likely to suffer high-wind damage than conventional wood-framed houses.

With this hurricane season expected to bring 17 tropical storms, of which nine may strengthen into hurricanes with winds of at least 74 miles per hour, homeowners should consider preparing their new home exterior with an Insulated Concrete Form (ICF) option. Solid concrete-reinforced walls built with Fold-Form have been proven to provide superior protection against flying debris from winds as high as 250 miles per hour, when compared to conventional framed walls or hollow concrete block walls. To learn more about the benefits of ICFs before, during and after hurricane season, contact a builder or visit www.foldform.com.



Solid concrete-reinforced walls built with ICF option Fold-Form, produced by building science technology leader Owens Corning, have been proven to provide exceptional protection against flying debris from winds as high as 250 miles per hour, when compared to conventional framed walls or hollow concrete block walls. As a frame of reference, FEMA states that historical major hurricanes, such as Hurricane Katrina, have achieved landfall wind speeds of 140 mph in southeast Louisiana.

“Homes built with ICFs provide homeowners with sustainable structures capable of withstanding extreme weather conditions,” says Dr. Ronald Zollo, professor of civil and architectural engineering at the University of Miami and a licensed professional engineer. “They’re easier to clean up after hurricane weather or flooding and

provide the homeowner with moisture resistance in the walls themselves, when combined with appropriate interior finishes. Those utilizing ICFs can also expect greater energy efficiency due to added thermal protection.”

Fighting Winds

The superior protection offered by ICFs is also backed up by the Insulating Concrete Form Association (ICFA), in conjunction with the Wind Science and Engineering Research Center at Texas Tech University, which conducted laboratory research to test the strength of ICFs. The tests found that the forms had the weight and mass to resist the impact of wind-driven debris at over 100 mph.

According to Dr. Zollo, “In the future, I think we’ll see faster recovery times for communities built with ICFs than those that are built without.”

Additional Use

“While ICFs meet some of the United States’ most strict building codes and are up to nine times stronger than traditional wood frames, they’re not just for hurricane protection,” says Jeff Van Sloun, business leader, Fold-Form. “We’re seeing a dramatic increase in consumer demand throughout the entire United States for building products that are greener, offer greater energy efficiencies, air and moisture management and contribute to greater comfort levels by reducing noise in the home.”

To learn more about the benefits of ICFs before, during and after hurricane season, contact an area builder or visit the Web site www.foldform.com.