

Helpful "Facts & Myths" regarding Hurricanes



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Forecasters predict 15 named storms to form in the Atlantic basin between June 1 and November 30 and 4 of

those storm to be major hurricanes with sustained winds of 111 mph or greater. Let's hope we don't have a hurricane on Long Island this year, but in the rare case it happens here are some "facts and myths" on how to protect your home. Some of the "Myths" listed surprised me, especially taping the windows!! Read on.....it's interesting.

Facts:

1. A new, well-installed roof is one of the best forms of protection available

If your shingle roof cover needs to be replaced, do it now, while there is still enough time for the shingles to heat up and seal properly before a storm threatens. Be sure to remove older material down to the roof sheathing and have the deck re-nailed. Spend a little extra to provide a secondary water barrier (in some areas, insurance discount may be available if you re-nail and/or install an approved secondary water barrier so check with your insurance company) and have a high wind-rated roof cover installed. IBHS has detailed guidance available to help you specify a quality installation.

2. Protecting all openings in exterior walls will greatly improve a building's chances for surviving a hurricane

One of the most important things you can do to improve the chances your home or business will survive a hurricane is to protect all windows and doors. The range of products on the market

today, such as storm shutters or impact-resistant windows, means it's easier to find protection that fits your budget. Whatever you choose, make sure the product has the proper product approvals for wind pressure and large-missile impact. If it is not a permanent product, place permanent fasteners ahead of time so installation is easier when storms threaten. Gable end vents can be shuttered as if they were a window. Garage door companies have bracing systems available for about \$400 that should work for most door styles.

3. Securing loose roof shingles is critical

Keeping shingles attached is critical. If the edge shingles are not well fastened or extend beyond the drip edge more than a 1/4", high wind can lift them off and create a peeling process or domino effect. If they come up without much effort (older shingles become brittle and may crack when bent too much), secure them with three one-inch dabs of roofing cement under each tab.

4. Sealing openings, cracks and holes will help prevent water damage

Water can invade homes in a number of ways, especially when it's being blown horizontally. The problem is compounded if there is a loss of power and air conditioners or dehumidifiers are unable to dry things out. Fill holes where wires, cables and pipes enter and exit the house and seal around electrical boxes and circuit breaker panels. Seal cracks around wall outlets, dryer vents, bathroom and kitchen vents, and wall lights.

5. Strengthening soffits (the material covering the underside of your roof overhang) also helps prevent water damage

Keeping soffits in place can help keep water out of your house. Some vinyl and aluminum soffit

covers have wood supports, but the soffit material is not adequately fastened to the wood, or there is no wood backing and the vinyl or aluminum channels are stapled or nailed to the wall. If there are wood supports, secure soffit material with sharp-pointed stainless steel screws. If the channels are just nailed to the wall, you can use polyurethane caulk to seal the channel to the wall and tie the parts together.

6. Limiting potential flying debris helps protect your building

Limiting possible sources of wind-borne debris by surveying your building's surroundings before a storm will help protect your home or business and those around you. Replace gravel/rock landscaping materials with shredded bark. Limit yard objects. Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed. Cut weak branches.

Myths:

1. Open the windows on the leeward side of the house so the air pressure doesn't explode the building

It is almost impossible to know ahead of time which wall will be the leeward wall – and wind directions frequently change as a storm passes. Trying to open and close windows during the storm puts you next to glass that can break, causing injury. Also, as wind direction changes, open windows could allow wind-driven rain to stream into your house or business and ruin belongings. The normal leakage of air around windows and doors will tend to keep the pressure in your building slightly lower than the atmospheric pressure caused by the storm outside. The greatest danger comes when a large window or door fails on a wall facing the wind.

The key is keeping all wind and water out with proper opening protection.

2. You only need to protect the openings facing the ocean or gulf

Because hurricanes are a moving, rotating storm, winds can come from any direction, which can change rapidly if you are near the eye. Your best bet is to protect windows and doors on all sides of your building.

3. Tape windows with a big "X"

Taping glass does nothing to address the main point of protection – keeping the glass in its frame and securely attached to the building.

4. Leaning or pushing against a window or door that is being blown inward by wind pressure can help keep the window or door from breaking or opening.

This clearly puts you in harm's way and increases the likelihood that you will be cut or injured. No matter what kind of glass you have, stay away from all windows during a severe storm. Before a storm threatens, review the anchorage of your doors. On entry doors, you can install extra latches and make sure that hinges are well-anchored with long screws that extend into the wall framing. Take protective action ahead of time so that you won't be tempted to try and keep doors closed by pushing on them. Put as many walls as you can between you and the windward side of your home.

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