



## TALKING POINTS

### HBAGNO Topic: Tips for preparing your home for hurricane season

**Hurricane Season begins on June 1 and ends November 30. Does the HBAGNO have any tips it can recommend to help people protect their homes and families?**

- **Tip 1: Secure Exterior Openings - Doors, Windows & Garages**

Doors & windows must be protected either by hurricane shutters or by an impact-resistant glazing such as laminated glass. Shuttering can be done with 5/8" plywood or metal storm panels. To save time before a hurricane, install the anchors or brackets now and store the shutters. Pre-cut plywood pieces should be mounted overlapping windows on all sides by 4" so that the shutters are attached to the frame underneath the exterior surface. Use anchors and wood screws to attach the anchors to siding or lag bolts for masonry. For double doors in which one door is active and the other is fixed, it's a good idea to reinforce the fixed door at the top and bottom. Some door manufacturers provide reinforcing kits. Additionally, check your doors for splits & cracks, and repair them immediately.

About 80% of residential hurricane damage starts with wind entry through garage doors, according to the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes. Many garage doors are made of lightweight materials to save on costs, but this makes them more vulnerable to high winds. Look for a sticker on the inside of your garage door that gives you a pressure rating. If you don't see a sticker, chances are you'll need to reinforce your door. Homeowners can replace garage door systems with impact resistance garage doors, which may cost about \$1,200, but could prove to be well worth the investment. A more cost-efficient option would be to use plywood or steel to reinforce existing garage doors, installing the bracings horizontally on each panel. It is also recommended that homeowners reinforce the track of the garage door with heavier gauge metal, and secure weak points by installing stronger supports and heavier hinges.

- **Tip 2: Storm-Proof the Roof**

First, determine what type of roof you have. Homes with gabled roofs are more likely to suffer damage from high winds. A gabled roof can be strengthened by installing additional braces in the trusses and/or at the gable ends. A qualified builder can also install galvanized metal hurricane straps. For all home types, hurricane straps or clips must be installed by a roofing contractor when the roof is being replaced, since it requires access to the inside of the roof underneath the sheathing. These straps/clips should be placed where the roof truss adjoins the exterior wall.

When the trusses are exposed, check to make sure they are properly fastened - fasteners include nails and staples. If the fasteners have missed the truss, the roof is weakened. Homeowners may want to add nails if existing fasteners are scarce or if they have missed the top cord of the roof.

- **Tip 3: Check your Landscape & Lawn Decor**

Every year, falling trees and tree limbs cause hundreds of millions of dollars in damages - and sometimes personal injuries or deaths. Homeowners should regularly check for signs of damage or disease, including cracks in the trunk or major limbs, insect infestations, trees that lean significantly, branches hanging over the house or near the roof, limbs in contact with power lines, or mushrooms growing from the bark, indicating decay.

Bring in outdoor furniture such as garden decor, garbage cans, patio table, umbrella, chairs, grills, outdoor toys, potted plants, etc. These things can all become flying objects in a storm and can cause additional injury or damage in high winds.

- **Tip 4: Porches & Fences**

While putting up fencing, leave spaces at the bottom instead of driving every panel into the ground to allow air to go under the fence, rather than knocking it down. Porches have weak roofs. Make sure the roof is bolted to the exterior wall of the house, and that the porch is firmly attached to the house.

- **Tip 5: Indoor Provisions**

Turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep the doors closed. Just prior to the storm, turn off the utilities and all gas. Get candles, matches, flashlights, batteries, and a battery-operated radio. Store drinking water and water for flushing the toilet and taking baths. Fill the bathtub, pots, and clean pails with water and keep in a secure place.

As builders and HBA members, we take great pride in the houses we build for the people of our community. By offering these tips, we hope we can help everyone protect their lives and their biggest investment—their homes.

*Dan: Should we add something to the Indoor Provisions Tip #5 about perhaps securely storing important papers; having enough cash or credit card for a possible evacuation; videotaping the contents of the home for insurance purposes; or should we just stick to the physical preparations?*