

Protecting your home with Hurricane Fabric

By Jon Sader

Hurricanes are one of the most destructive powers on earth that can wreak havoc on your home in many ways. Elevating your home or being outside of a flood zone may help prevent hurricane damage but is not nearly enough to protect it from its other violent characteristics. The home's building envelope is vulnerable to wind-borne projectiles during a storm and this may lead to significant damage if the envelope is penetrated. Protecting against wind borne projectiles should be a major concern. If one small window in the home breaks during a hurricane, significant amounts of moisture and debris can enter the home due to immense amounts of rain and wind.

In addition, the pressure differentiation between home's interior and the exterior hurricane environment outside can cause massive amounts of property damage. The extreme wind speeds of a hurricane can cause massive pressure in and outside of the home. Once the building envelope has been breached by a broken window or door, these openings can cause a dangerous over or under pressurization of the home. The pressure may become so great that the remaining windows and doors may blowout. In extreme cases, the roof of the home may even separate and fly off.

Installing duct tape on windows and doors is a common practice. However, installing tape on your windows is equivalent to placing a band-aid on your leg in order to prevent a bone from being broken. It will do nothing to stop a projectile from shattering the glass and causing massive water and wind damage to your home.

Placing plywood over your windows and doors is not the simple solution that everyone makes it out to be and should only be used as a last resort. If the plywood is installed incorrectly, it may not prevent high flying projectiles nor will it protect against hurricane winds. Regardless of how it is installed, it will always leave unpleasant nail holes around your window and door trim that may compromise the home's building envelope over time. Moisture and insects may find these holes, which could lead to termite infestation or other nuisances.

Hurricane shutters are another solution as they help prevent flying debris and high wind speeds. However, these can be very expensive and are installed so that you have to leave them up year round. These shutters also add expense because most of the time they require a contractor to install them on your home.

The best option for protecting your home is by using hurricane fabric over your windows and doors. Hurricane fabric is a resin-coated fabric, very similar to trampoline material, which is installed over windows, doors, garage doors, or other options. The fabric itself will prevent up to 97% of wind entering the home. It will and can protect against a flying 2 x 4 at speeds of 100mph depending on how large the opening may be. In the case that a projectile hits the fabric, the window may break, but the fabric itself will retain and prevent the rain and wind from flooding and pressurizing your home. In

addition, unlike the “cave-effect” that occurs due to plywood covering windows, some brands of fabric allow light to come in, allowing some natural light in the home, which is a convenience if the power is out, and the house is still occupied.

One of the best aspects of hurricane fabric is that it is very easy for anyone to install. Here is the process of installing hurricane fabric:

- Once you have purchased the hurricane fabric and its components, you will need to measure the windows, doors, or any other openings of your home
- Using a utility blade, cut the hurricane fabric so that you leave a few inches around all of your openings
- Connect the plastic fasteners around the edge of the fabric
- Using a drill, drill a small hole in the trim of your windows and doors to install the metal grommets
- When ready to place the hurricane fabric over your windows & doors, screw the small bolts through the opening of the plastic fasteners of the hurricane fabric to the grommets installed around the opening

Hurricane Fabric’s ability to install rapidly is a vast improvement over plywood when time is precious given an impending arrival of a hurricane. It is also much more cost-effective than hurricane shutters as they tend to be much more expensive and often require a contractor to install them. Given the stark benefits and its ease of use, hurricane fabric is the best viable option to protect your home from hurricane winds.