

## Shutters and Opening Protection

- **Protecting the glass in windows and doors can act to keep hurricane force winds from entering the house.** If allowed to enter a home, these winds will threaten life safety, property damage, and perhaps failure of the structure itself. Protection of these openings is most often accomplished by the use of shutters, fabric shielding devices, or the use of impact-tested glass in the windows and doors themselves.
- **All opening protection must be product approved for use in our wind zone.** In most areas within Palm Beach County, the wind load has been determined to be the force of a 140 MPH wind gust for a 3 second duration. The pressure of this wind load on the openings is expressed in pounds per square foot. Generally, wind forces are greater for smaller openings than larger openings, and greater within 4 feet of the corners of the house than in the interior areas of the wall.
- **Opening protection must be able to withstand the wind pressure for the location it is used in the wall.** In the case of shutters or fabric shielding devices, the same shutter may be able to be used in a higher or lower pressure area depending on the spacing of the fasteners. For example, a shutter or fabric installation in the interior area of the wall may be able to resist 40psf of pressure when fasteners are spaced 12”o.c. If this same shutter were to be used in a corner installation, it may require the fasteners to be spaced at only 10”o.c. to withstand the 60psf of pressure bearing on the corners.
- **You must have a way out, once you seal up your house!** Normally, the front door acts as the exit from a home, but often the front door has a glass insert that an owner would want to protect. Section 1005.4.5 of the current Florida Building Codes requires that a “means of escape” be on the first floor of the home. It differs from previous Codes, in that it prohibits escape through the pedestrian door within a garage. During the temporary closure of storm shutters, any protective device that can be opened from the inside may be utilized on a sliding door, as the means of escape. Other methods of protecting the front door such as impact glazing, or fabric shielding devices that would allow use of the front door would also be acceptable. Some owners have designed accordion shutters scenarios, operable from the inside, to enclose a small roofed porch area, so they can use their front or french doors for means of escape. Others store a solid core door that is used as a replacement for their front door during storm events, another acceptable method of protecting the opening.
- **Any questions?**  
**You may call our Building Code “Helpdesk” at: 561- 233-5108.**