



Fire Marshals Association Of Palm Beach County

Topic: Residential Hurricane Shutters

Issue Date: 11/1/06

Hurricane shutters are intended to prevent the effects of a hurricane from impacting the interior of your home. However, shutters potentially could delay the discovery of a fire, allowing that fire to grow unchecked for a longer period of time. Shutters might also delay or block firefighters trying to use a window as an access point to fight a fire or effect a rescue. Finally, shutters can prevent the use of a window as a means of ventilating heat and smoke from a building, which can increase the danger to the occupants and can cause more extensive damage throughout a building.

The decision of when to put up hurricane shutters requires good judgment and common sense, and so does the decision of when to take them down. To help ensure the safety of our citizens, the Fire Marshals Association of Palm Beach County strongly recommends that residents keep hurricane shutters in place only when a storm threatens.

Check with your Fire Department to determine the requirements for your neighborhood.

Code References

Contact

Information

Palm Beach County Fire Rescue

Randy Sheppard, Fire Marshal

One and Two Family Dwellings

The Palm Beach County Fire Code does not require hurricane shutters to be removed after a storm passes. There are requirements for two means of escape from rooms used for living and sleeping however, the Palm Beach County Fire Code exempts one and two family dwellings from this requirement.

(Ord. 2004-073, 1.1.1) (Florida Edition of NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 24.2.2.1.1)

Multi-Family Dwellings

For buildings with fire sprinkler systems, in most cases leaving hurricane shutters in place is not a violation of the Palm Beach County Fire Code.

For those buildings without sprinkler protection, two means of escape from living areas must be provided. Leaving hurricane shutters in place on bedrooms, living rooms or other living areas could be a violation of the fire code.

(Florida Edition of NFPA 101, Life Safety Code, 31.2.4.1)