

## Codes protect people, property

Special to Builders Showcase

Florida's strict building codes require that all window and door systems in new construction meet minimum impact-resistant criteria in order to protect against property loss and injuries during hurricanes.

The deaths and devastating property losses resulting from Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Ivan have brought to light the importance of establishing minimum standards in the design and buildings of homes and businesses throughout all hurricane-prone areas, not just Florida. These codes are intended to establish minimum standards for structural safety, and increase safety factors, as well as public well-being.

In the midst of high-wind storms, structural openings like failed doors or windows compromise a home's structure. When pressurized outside air rushes to find low-pressure pockets of air and expand, the force may be enough to blow off a roof and destroy the home. In fact, such winds demolished hundreds of homes in the path of Charley, Frances and Ivan.

"We must educate the public," said Nanette McElman, P.E. and hurricane market development manager with Solutia Inc. "There are countless examples in the wake of the recent hurricanes of buildings and homes that were flattened because the windows and doors were not protected with code-approved products. Hurricane preparedness begins with safe buildings."

Solutia Inc. is a manufacturer of a tough plastic polyvinyl butyral (PVB) interlayer called KeepSafe® Maximum. When sandwiched between two pieces of glass, the interlayer provides extraordinary strength to the glass. On impact from hurricane force winds, laminated glass may crack, but the fragments tend to adhere to the protective plastic interlayer. Keeping the glass in place not only provides protection from dangerous flying or falling glass, which can cause serious injuries or fatalities, but it also protects the building envelope.

Following Hurricane Charley, there were countless examples of homes that had been protected by windows and doors manufactured with a KeepSafe Maximum interlayer.

In many cases, impact-resistant windows completely protected homes that stood next to devastated homes with inadequate protection.

The following are a few guidelines that homeowners who are building or renovating a home can use to ensure that they are purchasing window or door systems that meet Florida's building code requirements:

- Look for Florida Building Code or Miami-Dade approved products for large missile hurricane protection.

- Dealers of hurricane-resistant products should be able to provide a certificate of compliance to consumers who request it.

- Numerous insurance companies provide discounts for proper installation of code-approved hurricane resistant window products.

- Window and door systems made with KeepSafe Maximum glass are specifically designed to meet all code-required hurricane impact standards. Consumers can look for the imprinted KeepSafe Maximum bug on windows and doors to ensure that they are receiving hurricane code-approved products.

**KeepSafe Maximum is the trademark of Solutia Inc. For more information about KeepSafe Maximum, call 1-800-787-2331 or visit their Web site at <http://www.Keepsafe-max.com>.**