

# Hurricane-Proof Windows: What You Should Know

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## HOMEOWNER RESOURCES



# Hurricane-Proof Windows: What You Should Know



Now that you are on your way to finding a [window replacement contractor](#) to help you protect your home, ensure its sturdiness, and increase its long-term value, it is a good idea to understand the critical role windows play in the infrastructure of your home.

Hurricanes ravage areas with deadly winds, catastrophic storm surge, tornados, flooding, and more. When the storm has passed, the ordeal of repairing its damages has just begun. And while the consequences of hurricanes can be tragic, they can also be very, very expensive.

## Table of Contents

- [Hurricane Damage and Windows](#)
- [What Are Impact-Resistant Windows?](#)
- [Types of Shatter-Resistant Glazing](#)
- [Which Type of Impact-Resistant Windows Are Best For Me?](#)
- [How Much Do Impact-Resistant Windows Cost?](#)
- [Rebates and Tax Incentives](#)

# Hurricane Damage and Windows

“We have very recent reminders that these storms can be catastrophic,” reads a March 2019 report from [online science news site Phys.org](#). Here are some of the total damages in dollars from the last decade, according to data from [the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#):

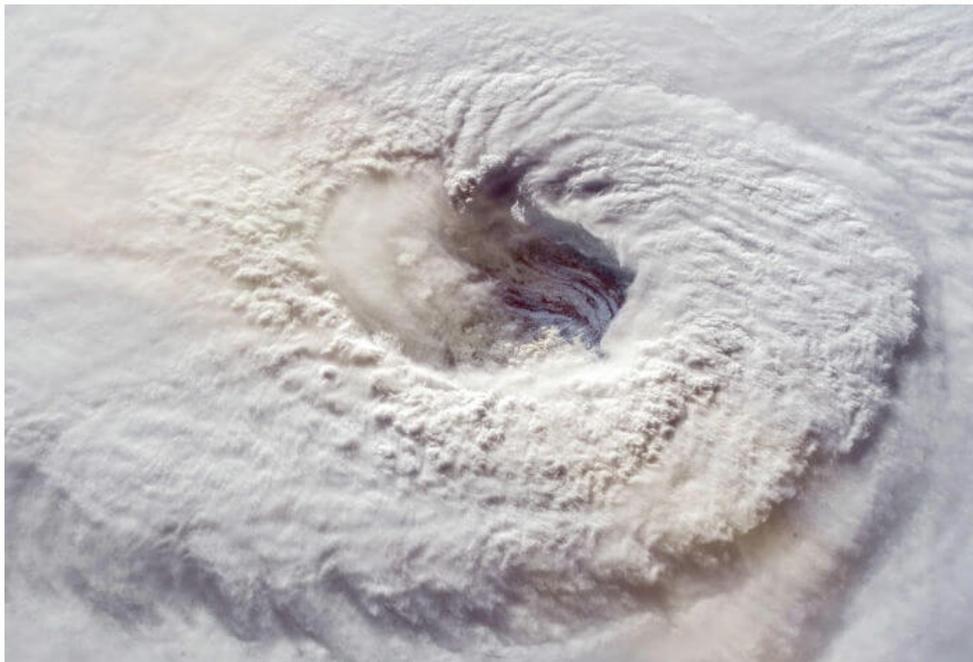
- 2005's Hurricane Katrina, \$161 billion
- 2017's Hurricane Maria, \$90 billion
- 2017's Hurricane Harvey, \$125 billion
- 2012's Hurricane Sandy, \$71 billion

“Urban coastal areas are under a major threat ... The amount of damage a hurricane creates depends on the intensity and characteristics of the storm, combined with the physical and social setting of the coastal area that it hits,” the reports explains. “Cities face a high risk of hurricane-related disasters since they contain higher populations and more infrastructure.”

For the 2021 hurricane season, [experts are predicting an above-normal hurricane season](#), with 17 named tropical storms, eight of which will become hurricanes.

At Modernize, we frequently interview homeowners to learn more about their home improvement challenges and preferences. In March 2021, we surveyed 694 homeowners living in hurricane-prone areas. We learned 26 percent of homeowners are concerned about the durability of their home's windows, ahead of the 2021 hurricane season.

Understanding your windows' ability to handle winds and various elements during hurricane weather is crucial to protecting you, your family, your property, and of course your home. An experienced contractor will not only assess the quality of your windows and their strength, but also provide knowledge about the local weather conditions.



At Modernize, we frequently speak to homeowners about their home improvement projects. In our recent interviews, 90 percent of homeowners requested a checklist to help them find and vet contractors for window replacement projects. Modernize now offers homeowners a free, digital [Contractor Checklist](#) as a simple, step-by-step guide to assist with your window replacement or upgrade project.

## What Are Impact-Resistant Windows?

As their name implies, impact-resistant windows are designed to withstand the impact of various elements, such as hurricanes. The window is constructed of impact-resistant glass mounted within a heavy-duty frame, which is then securely anchored within the window's interior frame.

Common options include:

- [Vinyl frames](#)
- [Wood frames](#)
- Metal or a blending of these materials

## Types of Shatter-Resistant Glazing

A common feature of impact-resistant windows is their glaze.

**Laminated glass** is made with [double-paned glass](#), which is comprised of an inner impact-resistant membrane situated between the panes. The glazing film is available in assorted tint styles that also work to regulate UV rays and lessen fading due to the sun. If stray debris strikes the window, it should be able to withstand the trauma. And while the glass itself may shatter, the reinforced frame is designed to hold the shattered pieces together.

An **impact-resistant film** could also be placed over each pane of glass. While not as sturdy as the inner membrane of the laminate, it similarly helps keep shards of broken glass in place should the window shatter. How well the window film functions depends on the stability of the window glazing and the [window frame](#).

## Which Type of Impact-Resistant Windows Are Best For Me?

When you are seeking to [replace your windows](#), it is important you study [each window manufacturer](#) to get a solid understanding of how its windows will react to harsh weather conditions, whether impact-resistant or not.

You can study guidelines for safe window construction in hurricane regions in [this report from the Federal Emergency Management Agency](#).

“In coastal environments, numerous post-disaster investigations conducted by FEMA have shown that windows and glazed portions of doors are vulnerable to impact from windborne debris,” it reads. “Debris from the natural environment (e.g., tree limbs) and from the built environment (e.g., roofing material, siding material, sawn lumber, etc.) can become windborne debris and break window and door glazing. Once broken, windows and glazed portions of doors can allow wind, windborne debris, and rain into the interior of the building.”

A trustworthy contractor will consult you on the right window to go with, and answer any questions you might have about the recommendation or your own preferred companies. No matter what, remember this window replacement project is for your home — you decide what's good enough.

## How Much Do Impact-Resistant Windows Cost?

Along with facing higher regulations like the ones cited above, and naturally comprising heavier and more durable materials, windows are more expensive than traditional by design.

Replacing your windows for the correct, climate-appropriate style is a costly, but worthwhile, investment. Calculating exact costs is complex, but final estimates will include considerations that include:

- [Window brand](#)
- Window material
- Window glazing
- Where you live
- The size of your existing windows
- The number of windows you will need
- The cost of installing the windows and completing the window replacement project

Generally, impact-resistant windows with laminated glazing for standard-sized window frames can average anywhere from **\$400 to \$800 per window**. Labor and installation can cost up to **\$100 per hour, per window**. Each window typically takes 1-2 hours to install.

## Rebates and Tax Incentives

Like other safety and home improvement investments, the government might subsidize some of the costs of replacing your windows to high-performance, hurricane-resistant windows.

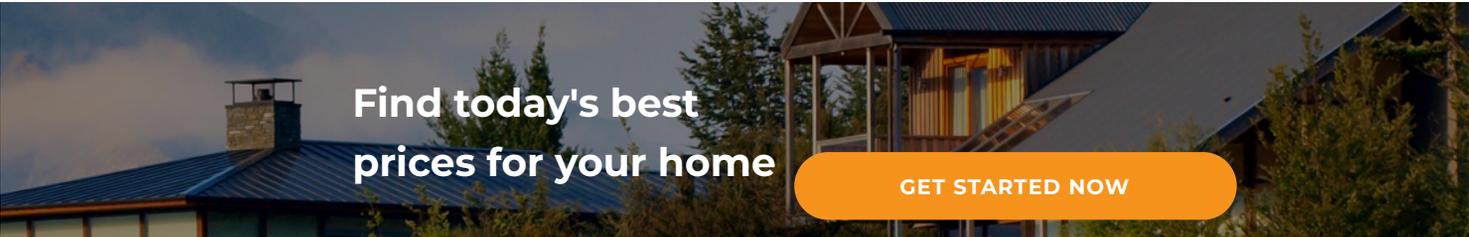
They may qualify for certain rebates and tax incentives due to their increased [energy savings](#).

Search the incentives and rebates in your state using the national [Database for State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency](#). But also rely on your contractor to list out and explain your options to you. Part of that contractor's value proposition is expertise in local law, regulation, and incentivization regarding your project. Be confident in both your project and the contractor doing it.

To find the best window replacement contractor today, [learn more about what companies like Modernize can do for you](#).

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