

Before, During and After THE STORM

Questions you should ask when deciding on a hurricane shutter company

Affordable Glass Protection, one of the area's leading designers, manufacturers and distributors of storm shutters and protection, serving both residential and commercial clients, offers this list of important questions to ask before deciding which hurricane shutter company will provide protection for your home or business.

1. How long have you been in the shutter business?

You can find out for yourself at www.sunbiz.org. First click on "Online Searches." Next click on Corporations, Trademarks, Limited Partnerships & Limited Liability Companies. Finally, click on "Name List" and then type in the name of the company you are researching and hit the submit tab. The address should not be a post office box or a home address, but an actual commercial address you can visit.

2. Are you a member of the Better Business Council (BBC)?

The BBC is an arm of the Melbourne Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce. They closely follow companies in Brevard County. You can call Chuck or Lisa at 321-984-8454 to get a report.

3. Are you a member of the Better Business Bureau?

You can find out if they are a member as well as see how many complaints, if any, were lodged against them by visiting www.bbb.com and click the "Business" link under the Check It Out heading.

4. Do you pull permits and Notice of Commencement (NOC)?

Shutters are an engineered product and usually require a permit to be pulled. Only a licensed contractor can pull permits. If the license holder is not a principal in the corporation, the business must have a QB (Qualifying Business)

license issued by the State of Florida. A customer should never be asked to pull the permit. An occupational license is not a contractor's license. NOC are required for any contract over \$2,500 and protect the customer from double billing.

5. Are you insured? Get a certificate of insurance, including contractor's liability, workman's comp and auto liability. Some contractors will not have a work comp policy, but instead hold an exemption. According to Florida law, only the principals in the corporation can hold a work comp exemption.

6. Do you manufacture your shutters? The state of Florida requires that all shutter manufacturing companies participate in a Quality Control program, and have a QC certificate issued in their name. (Florida Building Code State Statutes Chapter 9B-72)

7. Do you have engineering for your shutters? A shutter company should have engineering on all products to meet wind speed based on the zones set by the state of Florida and should also meet large missile impact. Ask to see the engineering and have it explained. Fastening schedules, maximum spans and deflection are all part of the specific engineering for each product. More information is available at www.floridabuilding.org.

8. Other suggestions: Visit their facility. Ask for referrals from previous customers. Look at some of their work. Do your homework on the products. Not all products being sold as hurricane protection are actual engineered products for windload and impact. Not all products are designed to keep your glass from breaking. Be sure to call Affordable Glass Protection at 321-722-9996 and ask these same questions. On the web visit: www.affordables shutters.com.