Hurricane Protection
Garage Door Bracing

By Bob Miller

First the disclaimer. I am not a structural engineer. I’m pro-
viding this info as just another homeowner in the Jungle Terrace
Neighborhood. My homeowners insurance has gone through the
roof as I’m sure your’s has. I spoke to my insurance company
and there are several things you can do to receive a discount. If
you have replaced all you windows with hurricane rated win-
dows you can get a discount. I replaced all my windows except
three. Woops, no discount for me. You can get a discount for
approved window protection. I have plywood for my windows.
Woops, plywood is not approved. Do you see a pattern here?
I decided to raise my hurricane deductible to 10% to lower
the cost and then do what I can to “harden” my home to protect
it during storms.

You may recall that I wrote an article about making and in-
stalling plywood covering for your windows. You can see that
article on our web page at
http://www.jungle-terrace.org/Data_Files/Plywood_Installation.pdf
You can also find it on our home page at www.jungle-terrace.org
A condensed version was in the August 2006 newsletter, also
available on our web site.

I found some very good information about protection homes
from storm damage at the FLASH “Federal Alliance For Safe
Homes” web site. Blueprint for Safety can be viewed at
http://www.blueprintforsafety.org. I discovered that a major
weakness at many homes is the garage door. My garage door is
a double wide (16’) door and although I though it was hurricane
rated, it isn’t. The giveaway is that only one brace spans the top
panel of my door. When I tried to find a source for the manufac-
tures hurricane bracing I discovered it would be easier to replace
the door so I looked for another solution. I think I found one.

The first thing I did was put 16 foot 2x4’s on each of four
horizontal panels. The biggest problem here was getting them
home. A rug on top of my truck and some twine to tie the ends
of my bumpers solved that problem. I used clamps to hold the
2x4’s on the door panels (pg 4) so I could drill holes and install
the bolts. I used stainless ¼” x 2 ½ ” bolts with nut and flat
washers.

This braced the panels horizontally but I saw a need for ver-
tical bracing also. I decided to use four 8 foot 2x4’s for this. I
went to one of our local home improvement stores and did some
looking around (I love doing that) for some ideas. My solution
had to be simple, easy and fast to install.

I found some stair tread hangers. They are normally used to
attach to a wall or board etc. and provides a place to support
stair tread. I attached them to the wall above my garage door
and made wood panels to attach my vertical 2x4”s to.
I decided that I needed four vertical 2x4’s. When installed I used clamps to hold them to the horizontal 2x4’s.

To keep things simple and fast I used heavy duty gate catches on the ends of the vertical 2x4’s. You will need a hammer drill to make the hole in the garage floor for the gate catch pin.

I store the vertical 2x4’s on top of the brace holders above the door. Two on the left side and two on the right.

Although this probably wouldn’t qualify for discount from my homeowners insurance company it certainly give me some peace of mind. I know it’s stronger than it was. All together I have less then $150 invested. OK it took some time to think it through and install it but I enjoyed that too. If you decide to do this don’t forget to disable (unplug) your garage opener when the vertical braces are installed. If you would like to have a closer look at this please call me, Bob Miller, at 727-343-4436. I’d be happy to show it to you. ***