

Hurricane study eyes home construction

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A 1950s-era house and two V-8 engines may help Florida scientists learn which construction materials and methods better withstand hurricane winds.

Studying construction methods and materials and how they withstand hurricanes' wind and water can prevent future damage, the Miami Herald said Friday.

Florida International University's International Hurricane Research Center and Laboratory for Coastal Research scientists used the V-8 engines to produce winds of 115 mph, which they trained on the condemned to learn on how older buildings fare, the Herald said.

Authorities said improving building against storms stronger is the best way to corral insurance costs, the Herald said. Insurers tend to charge higher premiums on older homes, assuming the dwellings won't fare well in storms because they were built under less rigorous standards.

The Florida Legislature has appropriated \$250 million for low-interest loans for homeowners to add storm-protection such as shutters and roof supports or new roofs, the Herald said. Home and business owners have seen insurance premiums increase by as much as three times over the past two years.

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