

SPECIAL FEATURE



At first glance this villa (above) looks like an ordinary coastal home. But beneath the surface (right) you'll find concrete's durability and energy savings. (Photos courtesy Force 5 Walls, Rodney Hubble)



Vacation Homes That Stand Up to Storms

In the classic children's story "The Three Little Pigs", the heroes build homes of straw, wood, and brick.

Home builder Rodney Hubble of Force Five Walls has a new twist on the old fairy tale. "Had the three little pigs included a concrete house it definitely would have survived the big bad wolf," he says.

The big bad wolf of this story comes in the form of Hurricane Ivan which huffed and puffed

across Alabama's Gulf Coast in early Fall. One of Hubble's homes, a three-story vacation retreat, was right in the path of the storm.

"This family can return to their beach home, while others are confronted with major repairs or starting over building from the ground up."

"When Ivan hit the coast of Alabama as a category 4 hurricane, I wasn't worried," Hubble says. "This vaca-

tion home in Kiva Dunes in Fort Morgan was built using ICF with 6" thick concrete walls throughout. I knew we had constructed a home that would stand up to the storm," he says.

In the end, the only damage sustained from Ivan was a partially dislodged roof grill vent.

"This was almost unbelievable considering the extent of damage in the area. This family can return to their beach home,

SPECIAL FEATURE



An ICF home can ensure a relaxing vacation. (Photo: Rodney Hubble Force 5 Walls)

while others are confronted with major repairs or starting over building from the ground up.”

Hubble has built homes out of Insulated Concrete Forms throughout the Southeast and is emphatic in his belief that structures built using ICFs utilize one of the strongest systems available on the market today.

“ICF construction is built to withstand hurricanes, other forms of severe weather, fire, and deterioration from rust and rot,” says Hubble.

Those who choose to build vacation homes do so with one main purpose in mind—to relax and find refuge from the ever-imposing tasks of everyday life.

A vacation home should be a place for fun and enjoyment. Building

with concrete helps to make this possible.

ICF construction is based on experience and testing. According to the Wind Engineering Research Center at Texas Tech University, concrete walls resist the impact of wind-driven debris much more effectively than traditional building materials.

An additional benefit of building with concrete is the amount of money it will save on the energy bills.

“The increased insulation, tighter construction, lower air infiltration and leakage allow builders to specify smaller heating and cooling equipment, reducing heating and cooling bills, say Hubble.

The house on Kiva Dunes experienced an initial reduction of 40

percent just on HVAC equipment alone. The average concrete home will also see a reduction of around 40 percent each month on their heating and cooling bills.

Insurance is another area of cost savings. Because ICF building technology withstands hurricanes and severe weather better than most building materials, a number of insurance carriers are now offering discounts on home owner policies to those who have built with ICF.

It just makes sense to build your vacation home out of concrete. The result is a durable, low maintenance, energy saving, safe haven for you and your loved ones to come together whenever possible to enjoy a stress-free, rejuvenating vacation.

Concrete Can Create a Safe Haven from Alabama's Often Stormy Skies



The brutal mood swings of Mother Nature send hurricanes and tornadoes ripping through Alabama on a regular basis.

These storms often destroy homes and businesses in their path. According to the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA), Alabama and the surrounding states are considered high-risk level for these types of deadly storms.

In fact, FEMA says that out of all regions of the country, Alabama "experiences the most frequent and strongest tornado activity."

Recent news reports show that tornadoes aren't the only worry for Alabama.

So far this year the South has been victimized by four substantial hurricanes with Ivan resulting in devastating damage on Alabama's coastal region.

Many home and business owners are getting smart and fighting back by building with concrete and concrete masonry.

This type of construction is a proven alternative to traditional construction methods. These

products provide the owner with a safer, stronger, more durable, energy-efficient structure than can be obtained with any other currently accepted method of construction.

In tornado and hurricane prone regions, concrete provides a safe-haven that has a proven reputation for standing up to some of the most destructive storms of recent times.

In addition to building stronger and more durable structures out of concrete and concrete masonry, many are incorporating safe rooms as part of their new or as an addition to their existing construction.

Home owners want a built-in place to go that's just steps away whenever severe weather strikes.

Henry Trimm, owner of Advanced Construction, has seen a rising trend in the desire for residential concrete safe rooms that can be custom designed to fit the needs of any home builder.

"Many of our customers are asking if we can build a multipurpose room such as a home theatre, closet, or master bathroom, that will double as a safe room. If done right, a home builder can add on a room or turn an existing one into a safe room that looks like any other room in the house," says Trimm.

Advanced Construction is currently building an ICF home in the Birmingham area that will incorporate a concrete safe room into its design. This particular safe room

ICF, Concrete Make Safe Rooms

(continues)

will double as a home theatre.

According to FEMA, Alabama has been at the front of pack when it comes to safe room construction.

In April 2002, Edgewater Oaks, a unique subdivision, was built in Jefferson County. Each of the 80 houses in the development included a safe room as part of its construction.

The new low-income homes were built to replace ones destroyed by a deadly 1998 tornado.

In fact, The Alabama Concrete Industries Association (ACIA) donated the concrete, steel reinforcing and the concrete pumping truck necessary to build the first concrete safe room.

Each of safe rooms built in Edgewater Oaks is specially designed to provide a secure place to go in the event of inclement weather.

Each safe room can be easily accessed. In some homes the safe room doubles as master bedroom closet. In the others, the safe rooms are a laundry room or guest bathroom.

After extensive research, Johnny Roberts, Construction Manager for Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham made the decision to build the safe rooms using concrete.

"We chose concrete, not only because of its strength and durability, but also because of the ease and convenience of its application.



Built in 2002, each of the 80 homes at Edgewater Oaks features a built-in safe room. The specially designed room doubles as a closet, laundry room, or bathroom and is easily reached in the event of a storm.

Concrete is easy to work with and since we utilize so many volunteer workers, we needed something that was easily taught," says Roberts.

Even manufacturing companies are adding safe rooms into their buildings.

Reno Refractories, Inc, in Morris, Alabama, is an example of a company that added a concrete safe room that doubles as a break room with vending machines and tables and chairs. "It's all part of taking care of employees," says Reno Vice President Charlie Kennedy.

This 25 X 50 foot room within the 100,000 square foot metal manufacturing building was specifically designed for storm protection.

It features 12-inch walls of solid concrete reinforced with steel rods. It is convenient and easily accessed by all of the company employees.

During any ordinary day employees can come to this room to relax and enjoy their favorite snack and conversation with fellow workers. In the event of a storm this same room could become a lifesaver.

"Storm shelters like the one at Reno Refractories reflect a new corporate interest in employee protection," says Woody Odom, coordinator of the Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency.

"Hopefully, this is a trend and more companies will take advantage of the innovative safety options for their employees."

ACIA