Protecting Mobile Homes

Generally in high winds, mobile homes are much less safe than site-built homes. Mobile homes built before 1977 should be considered even more dangerous as they vary in construction quality because there were no national unified Construction and Safety standards. Mobile home occupants should always seek safety in designated shelters when warned of an approaching tornado or hurricane. Many coastal areas are likely to flood during hurricanes. Learn evacuation routes and shelter locations prior to hurricane season.

High Winds and Flooding

Consider positioning your mobile home to take advantage of the natural wind protection provided by hearty 30-foot or higher wind-resistant trees such as hickory, pecan, live oak, cypress, American ash, pine laurel and water oaks. Sweet gum and pine trees are not wind-resistant and may fall on or otherwise damage the home. If possible, avoid positioning a home on top of a hill, in low, flood-prone places, or broadband to the most likely high wind direction (e.g., wind from open bodies of water, such as large lakes, the Gulf of Mexico, and Atlantic Ocean). You may wish to compromise ideal wind-resistant positioning for view, solar heating, air flow or layout. Even proper positioning and tie-downs will not ensure safety of your unit in high winds, so heed evacuation warnings.

Mobile homes should be anchored to withstand hurricane-force winds. Installation of mobile homes should be done by a professional. There are two types of tie-down methods. The “over-the-top” tie and the “frame” tie. The over-the-top tie keeps the unit from overturning and the frame tie prevents the unit from being blown off its supports. For maximum protection, use both over-the-top ties and frame ties to secure 10-, 12- and 14-foot-wide mobile homes. Check with local city or county officials for the exact number of ties and anchors required in your area.

Install permanent piers and footings under the supporting steel frame of your mobile home. Piers and footings should be heavy enough to anchor your home to the ground. Check the requirements for piers in your area.
Do not install turbine or other vents that were not installed by the manufacturer. These have not been very effective at saving energy on units with a well-insulated roof system and they will weaken the structural integrity of the unit.

To tie down a mobile home…

- Over-the-top straps keep the homes from tipping over. The straps are secured with anchors on each side.
- Frame ties made of wire rope or rust-resistant steel strapping prevent the home from tipping over. They may secure the frame, but if the home itself is not strapped down properly, the home can be blown off its tied-down frame.
- Use both over-the-top straps and frame ties to secure mobile homes 10, 12 and 14 feet wide. (Double-wides, because their width makes them more stable, usually require only frame ties.)