

We're Not in Kansas Anymore!



Working and living in the Midwest's Tornado Alley, we've learned a thing or two about twisters and their incredible destructive power. Being in the window business, we decided to do something about it.

Unlike hurricanes, tornado design criteria are not "built into" the standard building codes. Specialized codes and specifications must be utilized by architects to plan for these events. Our chairman, Gantt Miller, led an AAMA task force to create a new voluntary specification, AAMA 512-11, Voluntary Specifications for Tornado Hazard Mitigating Fenestration Products, which provides a rating system to evaluate a window system's ability to withstand impact, pressure cycling and water penetration. The level of testing depends on the type of facilities and FEMA performance zone where the building is located.

Many schools, hospital emergency rooms, police/fire headquarters and other public buildings are opting to include a safe room in their design. Since these rooms must also serve as workable space year round, windows are an important element.

Other documents that address storm shelters include FEMA 320 and FEMA 361. The 361 document, for example, includes a section on tested glazing material. The ICC 500-2013 Standard for the Design and Construction of Storm Shelters addresses specific testing issues.

If a storm shelter is on your drawing board, give Winco a call. We'll help guide you through your best options for tornado resistant windows and doors. For technical support, contact Kurtis Suellentrop, at KurtisSuellentrop@wincowindow.com.

