



## FLORIDA BUILDING CODE BINDING INTERPRETATION



Date: July 21, 2009  
Report # 50  
Petitioner: James DiPietro  
Year: 2007  
Code: Residential  
Section: Section R310.4

1. Does R310.4 prohibit the temporary installation or closure of storm shutters, panels, and other approved hurricane protection devices during the threat of a storm over the required exit door as specified in R311.4?
2. In R202, the definition of "Means of Escape" states that it must be independent and remotely located from the means of egress.
  - a. Does this section require two independent ways to exit a residential structure when protection devices are installed during the threat of a storm?
  - b. If both a means of escape and a means of egress are required when protection devices are installed during the threat of a storm, can they share a common path of travel? An example would be a stairway on a two story residential structure where the means of escape must be a path to a door at street or ground level.
  - c. If two independent ways are required how far apart would be considered "remotely"?
3. If both a means of escape and a means of egress are required when protection devices are installed during the threat of a storm and must be remote, can they share a common path of travel? An example would be a stairway on a two story residential structure where the means of escape must be a path to a door at street or ground level.
4. Can the "means of Escape" that is required by R310.4 be protected by an external protective device that is releasable or removable from the inside? An example would be an in-swinging door protected by an accordion shutter that is releasable from the inside.

Answer:

1. No, as long as a "Means of Escape" is provided.

2. a. No. During the threat of a storm, only one (1) is required.  
b. Yes; however, both are not required under these conditions.  
c. N/A
3. N/A; both are not required under these conditions.
4. Yes

Commentary: We must keep the terminology consistent with the code. By definition, the “means of egress” consists of three (3) separate and distinct parts: the EXIT ACCESS, the EXIT and the EXIT DISCHARGE.

Obstruction of the means of egress possibly by storm panels during the threat of a storm would be the “EXIT”, which is allowed by R310.4 during the threat of a storm IF you provide a “MEANS OF ESCAPE” (an alternate way out).

In Residential occupancies the “means of escape” can be independent from the “exit,” however, it does not have to be. The main exit door can also serve as the means of escape if it is a solid door, located on the exit floor and does not require opening protection.

The idea is to get people out of the house during an emergency. As stated, to do this does not require two separate and independent “means of egress,” you simply need a way out, an “approved exit” that’s not blocked by hurricane protection devices, which MAY be “separate and independent” of the main (primary) exit discharge but does not necessarily have to be.