



Engineering Investigations of Hurricane Damage: Wind versus Water

Edited by David B. Peraza, P.E., William L. Coulbourn, Morgan Griffith

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After a hurricane or tropical storm strikes, civil engineers are often called upon to investigate the resulting damage to structures. One of the common assignments is to distinguish between wind damage and water damage. This task can be complex, requiring expertise in structural engineering, historic building codes, construction practices, wind forces, and water/wave forces, as well as familiarity with meteorology. The engineer may be asked to provide a rational estimate of the extent of wind damage to a structure that was subsequently destroyed by water. This publication provides civil engineers with the background and guidance necessary to conduct engineering damage investigations of structures following hurricanes, focusing particularly on distinguishing between wind damage and water damage. The first part introduces the scientific background and engineering principles of topics essential to an investigation: hurricane characteristics, wind speeds, storm surges, building codes, and the response of buildings. The second part applies these principles and covers the practical side of carrying out a post-hurricane damage assessment, including planning and managing an investigation, tips for conducting a field investigation, researching specific events, and writing reports. A final chapter offers case studies illustrating ways to synthesize and apply all the collected information. This valuable resource will assist civil engineers in providing efficient and high-quality services, based on sound technical principles, to clients such as insurance firms, building owners, and local governments.

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