Recommended Residential Construction for Coastal Areas

Building on Strong and Safe Foundations

About the Cover

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast with recordbreaking storm surge that destroyed foundations and devastated homes from Louisiana east to Alabama. Katrina was so destructive that engineers assessing the carnage no longer looked for “success stories” (i.e., homes that were only moderately damaged), but rather searched for “survivor” homes that, while extensively damaged, still bore a slight resemblance to a residential building. Hurricane Katrina proved that, without strong foundations, homes on the coast can and will be destroyed.
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Preface

Since the publication of the First Edition of FEMA 550 in July 2006, several advances have been made in nationally adopted codes and standards. Two editions of the International Residential Code® (the 2006 IRC® and the 2009 IRC) and the International Building Code® (the 2006 IBC® and the 2009 IBC) have been published and the long awaited International Code Council (ICC) 600 Standard for Residential Construction in High Wind Areas (a successor to the legacy standard SSTD-10) has been issued.

To keep pace with developing codes and standards and to improve its guidance, FEMA is issuing this Second Edition of FEMA 550. In addition to being renamed to more accurately reflect its applicability, the Second Edition of FEMA 550 contains a new foundation style Case H, which incorporates an elevated concrete beam for improved structural efficiency. The Second Edition of FEMA 550 has also been updated for consistency with the 2006 and 2009 editions of the IRC and IBC, and the 2005 Edition of ASCE 7 Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures.
Acknowledgments

FEMA would like to thank the following individuals who provided information, data, review, and guidance in developing the Second Edition of this publication.

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