

Tarco ROOFER'S REPORT

Self-Adhering Underlayment Holds Fast Against Wilma Mod Bit Protects While Tiles Blow Away

This has been a tough year for the Gulf States, weather-wise. South Florida, which usually bears the brunt of hurricanes spawned each season, escaped serious wrath from Katrina and Rita, but was dealt a direct hit by Hurricane Wilma. Strengthening to Category 3 before making landfall along Florida's southwest coast on October 24, Wilma swept across the state in less than 5 hours, leaving a broad swath of devastation before moving out into the Atlantic just north of Palm Beach.

The damage to residential and commercial structures was severe and widespread. As it passed through many densely populated communities, Wilma left its mark on an untold number of buildings, including roofs of various kinds that had survived other storms in the past.

Beneath the Tiles

Mediterranean-style tile roofing has become increasingly popular in Florida in recent years for both residential and commercial properties. Although there have been improvements in building codes for tile roofing, even recently installed tile roofs can be damaged by Category 2 or higher hurricanes. Hip and ridge tiles that trim the edges of a roof are especially vulnerable to wind damage. This can occur on older homes and new homes alike, as well as on homes located inland where wind speeds may be considerably less than along the open coastline. According



LeakBarrier Fast90 from Tarco survived the fury of Wilma when she passed through the Palm Beach area. Intended for use as a tile underlayment, Fast90 was serving as a primary roof for these residential homes because of delays in the delivery of tiles. (Photographs courtesy of Always Roofing, Lake Worth, Florida.)



to the Tile Roofing Institute (TRI), improper installation is primarily to blame in such situations.

Early indications from South Florida are that Hurricane Wilma inflicted similar roof damage to what was seen in the previous year. In areas where wind speeds topped 100 miles per hour, hip and ridge tiles typically were missing or damaged.

Regardless of whether the damage to tiles is minor or major, if a tile roofing system is breached the interior of the building can suffer serious damage. When the tiles are compromised by wind or water, the underlayment must protect the building until the roofing system can be repaired. As so often happens during and following hurricane season, replacement materials and installers are both in short supply, so the underlayment may have to serve as the primary roof barrier for days, weeks or months.

It is one thing for a roof to be damaged, but the interior damage that results from a compromised roofing system can be even more costly to the building owner or homeowner. The integrity of the roof beneath the tiles must be ensured before more storms come along. If the tiles have been damaged, a high-quality, moisture-resistant underlayment is the best, and sometimes the only, protection for the building.

Sticky Underlayment Holds Fast

Tarco recently introduced LeakBarrier Fast90™ underlayment for tile roofing to Florida roofing contractors. Similar to tried-and-true 90-pound felts, Fast90 is made from a premium quality organic mat that has proven to be an effective moisture barrier beneath tile roof systems. But there is one major difference between the two: No hot mopping of asphalt is required for Fast90 installation. The bottom side and the side-lap seam have a self-adhering compound of high-tack, SBS-modified asphalt, which is protected by a release film for easy installation.

Among the first to adopt Fast90 was Mike Solomon of Always Roofing, Inc. Solomon is also President of the Palm Beach County Roofing & Sheet Metal Contractors Association (PBCRSM). The group's Web site is www.pbcroofers.com.

Solomon began using Fast90 in early 2005. He knew that one reason for using this product was its greater exposure limits compared to other products. Facing unpredictable delivery times for tiles – and an approaching hurricane season – he installed Fast90 on several new residential homes.

Before Hurricane Wilma blew through Palm Beach, Solomon had no idea how well the Fast90 underlayment would perform under high winds, and especially under the extreme high wind speeds of Wilma. The product was developed for use underneath tiles, which normally shield the underlayment from the direct effects of wind and weather.

Property destruction was widespread in the aftermath of Wilma. Smashed windows, downed power lines, ruined roofs and uprooted trees were everywhere. Yet the homes with Fast90 installed by Solomon survived Wilma's fury without damage to the underlayment itself, demonstrating that Fast90 can function temporarily as a primary roofing system, and also that it can provide outstanding protection against hurricane force winds – with or without tiles above.

Fast90 is a peel-and-stick product. Its bottom-side tackiness is the result of an SBS-modified asphalt coating that serves as both waterproofing agent and adhesive. It is not surprising that the self-adhering Fast90 membranes held tight as Wilma's winds blew past. Although strong winds can uplift tiles and even asphalt shingles, Fast90's "mod-bit" coating adheres tightly to the roof deck. The self-adhering selvedge along the side length of the underlayment is also coated with a peel-and-stick adhesive, which ensures there are no flaps of

underlayment blowing in the wind as successive sheets are applied.

If That's Not Enough

What else can Florida roofers expect from this underlayment, besides long exposure limits and superb performance under hurricane-force winds? To top it off, Fast90 is easy to install. Installation times are dramatically less in comparison to 90-pound felts that are mopped in hot asphalt.

Fast90 also has a mineral-surfaced topside, which protects the underlayment from ultraviolet radiation and provides traction to roofers. According to Steve Ratcliff, president of Tarco, this product was specially designed for tile roofing and is the only product of its kind on the market with a patent pending.

"At this stage, unless I had my tiles already delivered on-site and ready to install, I wouldn't think of using anything but Fast90," says Solomon. "My crews are finding that it is easy to install. It handles the weight of the stacked tiles well and the mineral-surface provides good traction."

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