

The Real Cost of Buying a Home Near the Coast

(And How to Avoid Expensive Surprises in Baldwin County—and Beyond)

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Disclaimer: This guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal, financial, or insurance advice. Always consult with licensed professionals for specific guidance regarding your property purchase and insurance coverage.

Why This Guide Exists

The #1 question I get on YouTube and from buyers moving South? “What’s the insurance like?” The second? “Do hurricanes hit this area often?” This guide breaks down the real costs and risks that come with buying a home in a storm-prone area—especially Baldwin County, Alabama—so you can compare options with eyes wide open. Florida, Alabama, the Carolinas—no two coastal markets are priced or protected the same.

Hurricane Risk by Region

Storm frequency and severity across popular coastal destinations:

- Baldwin County, AL: Avg. 1 storm every 2.5–3 years. Major: Ivan (2004), Sally (2020).
- Destin–Pensacola, FL: Avg. 1 per 2 years. Major: Michael (2018), Sally (2020).
- Naples–Miami, FL: Frequent. Major: Irma (2017), Wilma (2005).
- Charleston–Myrtle Beach, SC: Avg. 1 per 3–4 years. Major: Florence (2018), Matthew (2016).
- New Orleans–Lake Charles, LA: Avg. 1 per 2 years. Major: Katrina (2005), Ida (2021).

Homeowners Insurance – Cost Comparison

- Baldwin County: \$3,500–\$6,500/year. Gold Fortified roof can save up to 55% off these rates.
- Destin, FL: \$5,000–\$9,000+. Limited discounts, major insurer exits.
- Charleston, SC: \$2,800–\$5,500. Elevation-based savings.
- Lafayette, LA: \$4,500–\$7,500+. High flood risk.

- Houston, TX: \$2,500–\$5,000. Risk varies by zip/elevation.

What Impacts Your Premium

- Roof age and material.
- Age of Plumbing
- Age of Wiring
- Age of HW Heater & HVAC
- Elevation and flood zone.
- Construction type.
- Proximity to coast.
- Private carrier availability.
- Past claims (CLUE reports).

5 Questions to Ask Before You Fall in Love with a Home

1. Can I get flood + homeowners + wind quotes before going under contract?
2. How old is the roof, and is it fortified? Do you have a copy of the certificate?
3. Is this area in a special flood hazard zone?
4. Are wind and hail coverage included or separate?
5. Has the property flooded before?

Ages of the Plumbing, Wiring, HW Heater, and HVAC (if not new construction)

Real Insurance Examples from Baldwin County

- 2025 New Construction, Fairhope, Gold Fortified: \$1500/year \$466,000 purchase price
- 2025 New Construction, Daphne, Gold Fortified: \$1200/year (State Farm Bundle)
- 2025 New Construction Gulf Shores, Gold Fortified \$2000/year
- 2020 build, Spanish Fort, fortified roof: \$2,300/year. No flood zone.
- 2013 Build with new fortified roof, Foley \$2513/year. NO flood zone
- 2003 Built with newer unfortified roof Foley \$2800/year. NO flood zone
- 1978 Build Spanish Fort no fortified roof \$3850/year. No flood zone
- 2005 home, Gulf Shores, non-fortified: \$6,800/year. Flood zone.
- Condo Gulf Shores 2 Bedroom/2 bath additional insurance assessment 2024: \$4,354.40
- 1988 home, Lillian, old roof: \$5800 Often uninsurable with major carriers. Flood zone.
- Waterfront Short Term rental in Gulf Shores: \$4796.50/yr (flood) and \$22,493.20/yr (dwelling).

Condos vs Houses – What to Know About Insurance

- Condos generally require two policies: HO-6 (walls-in) and the association's master policy.
- Monthly condo dues typically cover part of the building insurance, but not your contents or interior upgrades.
- Wind and flood may or may not be covered in the HOA policy—always confirm.
- Houses require full homeowners (HO-3 or HO-5), wind, and flood (if applicable).
- Condo buyers often underestimate costs like special assessments or uncovered wind damage.
- Fortified construction can apply to both, but houses often allow more control over upgrades.

Want to Go Even Deeper?

If you're serious about understanding the risks and insurance realities of buying near the coast, especially in Alabama, I highly recommend reviewing the official Alabama Coastal Insurance Shopper's Guide. Published by the Alabama Center for Insurance Information and Research (ACIIR), it's packed with in-depth guidance on everything from how to evaluate replacement cost vs actual cash value, to understanding flood zones, policy exclusions, deductibles, and how to shop insurance quotes the smart way.

The guide also includes practical checklists and comparison tools that help you evaluate quotes side-by-side, as well as detailed breakdowns of lesser-known coverage options like ordinance and law protection, and living expenses after a storm.

Recommended Reading:

Alabama Coastal Insurance Shopper's Guide

Published by the Alabama Center for Insurance Information and Research

Culverhouse College of Business, University of Alabama

Access it at: <https://aciir.culverhouse.ua.edu/ShoppersGuide>

Including insights and credit from this comprehensive resource helps ensure you're making well-informed decisions, and I encourage you to use it as a companion alongside this guide.

How I Help You Avoid Mistakes

I run pre-offer insurance quotes, check roof status, analyze flood and storm history, and connect you with trusted inspectors and insurance pros. This is what protecting your investment looks like.

Recommended Insurance Contacts

These are some trusted insurance providers and professionals familiar with Baldwin County and coastal Alabama needs. Always get multiple quotes and verify current availability and policy options.

Agency / Provider	Contact Info / Website
Brian Lehmann – Alabama Coastal Insurance	https://alabamacoastalinsurance.com
State Farm (local offices vary)	https://statefarm.com
ThaHelps.com	https://thahelps.com
Southern Alabama Insurance, LLC	https://southernalabamainsurance.com

Thomas Harrison & Associates Insurance Agency Inc.

PO Box 507

Montrose, AL 36559

Contact: Brandi Williford

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*This information is for informational purposes only and all quotes should be verified on individual properties you may be interested in. I recommend getting at minimum 3 quotes (4-5 is better) and shop again at renewal times.