

Windows - FAQs

Why should I choose Vinyl over other materials used for windows?

We all know that wood windows require many hours of maintenance, and the end result is always flaking paint or rotting sills:

Wood windows do not have an internal drainage system, meaning the water has to pass over the frames to drain.

Fiberglass windows do have an internal drainage system but the corners of the frame are screwed and caulked together. This means that through expansion and contraction the corners will open up, resulting in air and especially water leakage.

Aluminum Windows have the same corner leak problems as Fiberglass, as well as being colder. Vinyl is the most durable product with very little maintenance. All corners are welded together, leaving no chance of leakage.

Why should I buy custom replacement windows?

Custom windows are designed and manufactured for a perfect fit. And that means less air infiltration and a more uniform appearance compared to stock windows.

What's the difference between vinyl, wood, & aluminum windows?

Vinyl is an excellent insulator versus aluminum which is a major source of lost energy. Wood windows may swell and shrink when the temperature and humidity shifts from season to season. Wood windows require routine maintenance.

The performance and longevity of vinyl windows compare very favorably to other building materials. They offer long-lasting beauty, low maintenance and excellent thermal efficiency ratings. Unlike other materials, vinyl won't pit, peel or fade over time and requires only simple care and cleaning.

How is it possible for a window contractor to offer a 40% discount on my window order?

Beware of any window dealer offering huge discounts. Often they have inflated their prices to make an inferior window seem like a good deal. If possible try to obtain 2 or more quotes on the same brand of window, making it obvious which discounts are genuine.

How is replacing windows different from putting windows in when the house was built

new?

Your house now has finished siding, walls, and trim which you probably want left intact after the windows are replaced to minimize disruption and cost. A replacement window is made to fit into your old window's sash opening (the area of glass including its frame and any hardware) and doesn't require the removal of interior or exterior casings. The installation of a new construction window (most likely what is being replaced) would require removal of the entire window including its jamb, head, sill, and casings to expose the stud opening. Although certainly an option, this method is more labor intensive and invasive and would involve walls and siding beyond the casings.

Everyone talks about their "Spacer". Why is this so important?

A spacer is the material, which bonds 2 pieces of glass together, creating an insulated glass unit or "sealed unit". A good spacer can improve the efficiency of a sealed unit by up to 20%, reducing the transfer of cold from the outer to the inner pane. A warmer inside pane means greatly reduced condensation. A poor spacer (usually metal) allows for the transfer of cold to the inside pane, meaning more condensation. This moisture must drain and usually ends up under the sealed unit. When water freezes below an insulated glass unit it can cause stress on the unit resulting in seal failure (the bond between the 2 panes of glass is broken). Your sealed unit has now lost its insulation value. You now have 2 choices, to pay to have this unit replaced or to live with "foggy" uninsulated glass.

*Look for a high efficiency spacer with Warm Edge Technology, and a minimum 20-year non-pro rated warranty.

What do U-values and R-values really mean?

When choosing any window or door, look for information that lists the product's U-Value and R-Value. U-Values represent the amount of heat that escapes through a wall, window, roof or other surface. The lower the U-Value, the more energy efficient a material is. R-Values are the direct opposite and they measure an object's resistance to heat flow. The higher a material's R-Value, the lower its U-Value, and the less energy it will lose. An R-Value depends on the number of layers of glass in a window, what type of gas is between those layers, and whether one or more of the layers of glazing have been treated with a Low E coating.

What kind of glass is used, and how is that important to my buying decision?

A variety of standard and optional glass packages are available to consumers depending on the window and the manufacturer. Window units that are gas-filled (argon or krypton), Low-E

(Emissivity) glass, double and/or triple pane all provide more energy efficiency than single-pane ordinary insulated glass. In determining that value to you as a consumer, you need to decide how much or how little air infiltration and energy efficiency you desire from your windows.

In general, insulated glass improves the quality of windows and doors by:

Improving the performance of the U and R values

Reducing condensation

Keeping heat in and cold out during winter

Keeping heat out and cold in during summer

What does Low E stand for?

The term "Low E" means low emissivity. Emissivity is a property that's unique to materials, such as glass, which light can freely pass through. Low E is a coating of non-visible, microscopic layers of silver sandwiched between layers of anti-reflective metal oxide coatings. Added to the surface of window and door glass, Low E provides greater energy efficiency, increased comfort and protection from damaging UV rays. By filtering out the part of the light spectrum that transmits heat, Low E reduces a window's U-Value and increases its R-Value.

Why use exotic gases in the glass?

Argon and Krypton gas are used to add energy-efficient properties inside the airspace, between the panes of window glass. Because these gases are heavier than air, they provide greater resistance to heat and cold conduction through a glass unit. These gases exist naturally in the air we breathe and are safe to use within insulated gas units.

What does Energy Star mean?

Energy Star® is a joint program between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy to identify energy-saving products. To qualify, products must be 40% more efficient than common building codes and reduce energy bills by at least 15%. Energy Star qualification is based on NFRC certified product ratings.

Are your windows really custom-made for my home?

Yes, we measure, order, and install windows made specifically for your home. Your new windows will be manufactured and installed to fit your existing openings exactly.

What are grilles?

Grilles consist of muntin bars that form a decorative pattern on a window or door by dividing the glass in to smaller panes. Grilles (also referred to as grids) are available in a variety of styles depending on the window manufacturer you choose.

What does "cladding" mean?

Some windows have wood frames that are covered on the exterior and/or interior with a layer called "cladding" consisting of vinyl or aluminum. This cladding provides additional protection for the window frame by strengthening its resistance to outside weather or heavy inside usage.