



# Buyer's Guide to Replacement Windows

This guide is presented to help educate you about replacement windows for your home, so that you can make an informed choice.

Choosing the right window to replace your old, drafty windows can be confusing. But making the right choice about materials, styles and the installation company can help make your home more attractive, convenient and energy-efficient.

## Here is what to look for when choosing a replacement window:

### ***Frame Construction***

Many homes are originally built using inexpensive wood or aluminum frame windows, often with just a single pane of glass. These offer poor thermal performance. When replacing your windows, choose a window with a frame that will offer higher insulation values, combined with long-lasting durability.

The best choice for this combination is an insulated vinyl framed window. Insulated vinyl offers top thermal performance with superior strength and virtually no maintenance. Properly insulated and installed, the window frame itself offers a barrier to heat transfer.

Be careful! Vinyl windows vary widely in quality, and many do not include insulation within the frame, greatly reducing their thermal performance.

### ***Weather Stripping***

Even a window with good insulation properties can be compromised by inadequate weather stripping. This is the material that seals the gaps between the window and your home's walls, and the gaps between the frame and the glass. Most windows come with only single or double layer weather stripping. But for the best performance, look for a window with triple weather stripping.

### ***Glass Performance***

Because they take up so much area (80-90% of the window) the glass panes in a replacement window can be a huge source of heat transfer that allows warm air to seep out and cold air to seep into your home. Older single layer glass windows are the worst culprits.

For your replacement windows, choose at least a double pane glass, and preferably triple pane. Each zpane of glass is a "sandwich" that is filled with an

insulating layer of gas to help prevent heat transfer. The more layers, the better the insulation properties.

Make sure that your windows come with a label from the National Fenestration Research Council (NFRC), an independent testing laboratory that measures the thermal performance of windows and doors. The NFRC label lists insulating values in terms of U-Factor and Solar Heat Gain Rating. In both cases, the lower the number the better the window is at keep you warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

You should also pay close attention to the glass area in your new window. Many replacement window manufacturers take a short cut by making their frames larger and thicker, thus reducing the glass area. You should look for windows with thinner frames that provide the largest viewing area possible.

### ***Appearance***

You want your replacement windows to fit in with the design and décor of your home. Many manufacturers are limited in the styles and colors they offer. Look for a company that offers a good choice among double hung, casement, garden, bay, bow and picture windows. Modern technology has also made it possible to offer frames in colors and textures, so that you don't have to settle for plain white.



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## **Warranty**

Make sure your new windows come with a comprehensive warranty from the manufacturer, and a guarantee of workmanship from the installer. Many companies will warranty the frame, but not the glass. Try to find windows that have a glass warranty as well, just in case an accident occurs.

Your new windows should be the last windows you buy for your home, so make sure the warranty is at least 50 years.

## **Installation**

An important part of your overall window buying experience is the final installation. It is also critical that this step be accomplished by experienced professionals so that you can be sure of a proper fit and finish. Here is what you should expect during the installation process:

- Removal of your old windows is necessary. This may involve some noise and falling debris.
- We may require access to a power source for our equipment such as electric saws, etc.
- Please remove anything hanging on your walls or fragile items on shelves in the rooms where windows will be installed.
- Landscaping, shrubbery, etc., outside the window area will be protected with tarps.
- Your new windows will be properly fit, installed snugly and sealed against weather and drafts.
- The finish around the outside and inside of the new window will be replaced.
- All old windows and debris will be removed from the site and disposed of properly.
- The entire work area will be cleaned upon completion.

## **Working With Your Window Installer**

No matter how good the quality of your replacement windows, the deciding factor in a successful job is the quality and experience of the installer you choose. Here are some “tests” to determine if your window installer is qualified to do the job, and will be easy to work with:

- Is the installer open to discussion about my requirements?
- Does he offer design help and suggestions?
- Is he knowledgeable about window products, including features, benefits and warranty?
- Does he carry the necessary licenses and insurance coverage?
- Can I talk with him easily?
- Will the installer provide a list of references?
- Is the installer certified by the manufacturer?
- Does the installer have a good track record in the community?



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### ***Get it in Writing***

Your installer should provide you with a written estimate that includes:

- Description of work to be done.
- Specific materials to be used including product names and order numbers.
- Price including all materials and labor.
- Payment schedule or financing information.
- Time schedule.
- Clean up, debris removal, condition of the worksite.
- Installer's warranty policy or guarantee of work.
- Responsibility for permits if applicable.

### ***Our Reputation is Our Guarantee***

A&A Services has been working with homeowners on the North Shore and in southern New Hampshire for more than 25 years. Your neighbors know the high quality of work we perform, and the high level of service we deliver. Still, we also provide a written guarantee that supplements the manufacturer's warranty on materials.

*We look forward to serving your window needs!*



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