WINDOWS on WASHINGTON

The Windows on Washington
Replacement Window Buyer's Guide

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Introduction

Finding beautiful, energy efficient and affordable replacement windows for your home has never been easier. Whether increased heating and cooling costs or your home's appearance are your primary reasons for considering replacement windows, there are a great deal of choices available. The good news is there is an impressive amount of options when it comes to replacing your home's old windows. The bad news is with all of these choices, it can be overwhelming to wade through all the information to determine which type of replacement window is right for your needs and your home.

The *Windows on Washington Replacement Window Buyer's Guide* is designed to help you make sense of all your options and weigh your choices.

- When is it time to replace your windows?
- What style and type of replacement window is best for your home?
- What should you look for with regard to energy efficiency?
- How will you find a reputable replacement window manufacturer?

Great windows are only as effective as their installation, so finding a reputable experienced window replacement contractor must also be integral part of the equation. This guide will provide examples of the questions you should ask window replacement contractors so you can feel confident in choosing a solid contractor that will deliver on their promises. With a little 'homework' on your part, you will get beautiful, energy efficient, affordable replacement windows that will add value and beauty to what is for many of us our single biggest investment, our home.

When Is It Time to Replace Your Home's Windows?

Are your windows still doing their job or are they on their last leg? Every part of your home has a lifespan and your home's windows are no exception. How do you determine whether it is time to replace your home's windows? You should consider window replacement if you are experiencing any of the following:

IS IT TIME TO REPLACE YOUR WINDOWS?

1. You have growing heating and cooling bills.

One of the reasons that homeowners decide to replace their windows is a lack of energy efficiency. Advancements in technology and breakthroughs in manufacturing in the past 20 years have given homeowners many high quality, energy efficient choices. Quality replacement windows will offer most homes significant energy savings.

2. It is difficult to open and close windows.

Windows that are difficult to open or close are an indication that your windows may have reached their maximum life span. Water damage, warping and wood rot all negatively impact operation, which most often cannot be repaired. Replacement is the best option in this case.

3. Your existing windows are single-pane.

Single pane windows lack many of the features newer double or even triple pane windows offer, chief among them energy efficiency. Double pane windows are insulated and the cushion of inert gas maintained between the two panes of glass keeps in heat during the winter and AC inside during warmer summer months. Installing double pane windows will make a big difference in your energy bills, noise reduction and maintaining your home's comfortable temperature. For the utmost in fuel or energy savings, triple pane offers even better performance.

4. There is noticeable condensation or fogging between panes.

When you see condensation or fogging between your existing window panes, this is an indication that the window's seals have failed. Depending on the age and operability of the window unit, many times replacement is the only option.

5. Your home feels especially noisy or drafty in the winter and overly warm in the summer.

The right replacement windows will reduce the amount of outside noise you hear in your home. Likewise, highly energy rated windows will eliminate drafts and cold spots while window coatings will reduce sun exposure that can age furnishings and quickly make a room too warm.

6. There is wood rot on or around windows.

If there is visible rot on or around one or more windows, they should be replaced. Often, homeowners then choose to replace all of their home's windows at the same time to maintain consistency and curb appeal.

7. Your existing windows are difficult and time consuming to maintain.

At times, the upkeep associated with older windows is just too much. Many homeowners tire of repainting or repairing windows every few years and are searching for an alternative that will preserve the look of their home without the added upkeep.

6 Major Benefits of New Windows

Replacement windows offer one of the most significant return on investment of any home improvement project. If chosen properly, installed according to best practices and carefully maintained, you should never have to replace your windows again.New windows offer homeowners substantial benefits, including:

Return on Investment

Replacement windows offer one of the most substantial return on investment (ROI) of any home improvement project. According to Remodeling Magazine Cost Value Report 2013, ROI is 91-95% for replacement windows in the greater DC area if you intend to sell your home. So when the home is sold you should see an increase in the home value of almost the same amount you spent on replacement windows.

Home Comfort

Replacement windows offer many advantages over old windows when it comes to optimal temperature maintenance. A home that is cozy and warm in the winter and easy to cool in the summer is an often-overlooked element of home comfort.

Keeping your home comfortable and avoiding drafts in the chilly winter months is important, but did you know Energy Star rated windows also offer significant protection from the sun during the hot summer months? With the appropriate replacement windows, you will dramatically reduce the level of solar heat gain into your home, making it easier and less expensive to keep your home cool on those hot summer days.

Increased Energy Savings

Not only does the temperature of your home matter as far as comfort is concerned, there are some real world dollars and cents involved. Replacing your old, often drafty windows, especially if they are single pane, could slow the loss of energy from the windows by as much as 10x. Reducing this energy loss will save money with the first energy bill you receive.

Reduction of External Noise

Replacement windows offer added home comfort by eliminating or reducing the transfer of external noise. If your home is far from other homes or busy streets, outside noise might not be an issue, but anyone who lives in a bustling community would appreciate the sound difference. Feeling of comfort and well-being also stem from the improved security that new replacement windows bring.

Aesthetics & Curb Appeal

Windows will increase your home's curb appeal and value significantly. Even if you are considering selling your home, new windows are a highly sought after feature by prospective buyers and will set your home apart from the rest. Old windows can require a great deal of labor-intensive maintenance, which can put off even the best-intentioned perspective buyers. A home that is in otherwise good condition, yet has windows that show their age with flaking paint or poor operation, gives the overall appearance of a home in disrepair. The significant visible changes that replacement windows offer are truly amazing.

Ease of Care

Most windows started out looking good. Even your old, tattered, peeling, inoperable single paned windows once looked pristine. The problem with many of the older model windows is they don't look like that way for long and certainly not without a great deal of upkeep and maintenance. New replacement windows offer many attractive styles and choices in window types that require little or no maintenance. These windows are designed to keep their good looks for a lifetime. Likewise, if you are interested in windows that are easy to open and close, clean and offer no or minimal maintenance, the right replacement windows will accomplish your goals.

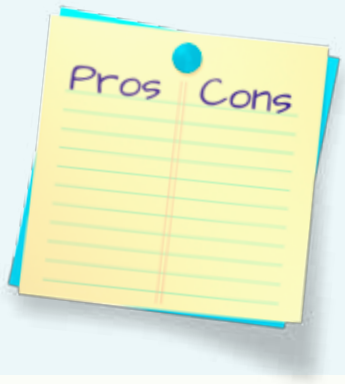
Replacement windows are a great way to maintain the look and optimal functioning of your home. Quality replacement windows installed by a reputable and experienced home improvement contractor will offer you as a homeowner significant energy savings, temperature comfort, zero or minimal maintenance and a home that looks beautiful inside and out.

Popular Replacement Window Types

There are a number of options to select from when it is time to replace your home's windows. Replacing your windows is a significant investment in your home. Likewise, you may only need to replace them once, so it pays to understand each type of window so that you get windows you love at an affordable price.

Vinyl

Vinyl windows are by far the most widely used type of replacement windows in part because they offer the highest energy efficiency options of any of the window types along with stylistic options and various price points. Color, grid and hardware choices allow you a few different style options for your home. These high performing windows are also the number one consumer choice because they are virtually maintenance free. Vinyl windows will never require painting or recoating, and are easy to clean. While vinyl replacement windows are a great option for most homes, some homeowners prefer the look of wood or perhaps have historic homes in which the use of wood maintains the home's original historically accurate aesthetics.



✔ Pros:

- Typically the lowest investment
- Best value for increased energy efficiency
- Many manufacturers to select from and compare
- Maintenance free
- Colors, grid and hardware allow you some style customization

✗ Cons:

- Some manufacturers have limited aesthetic options
- Some manufacturers do not offer Simulated Divided Lites
- Lower-end styles may not have the warm look of wood appealing to some homeowners
- May not be the best option for historic homes

Composite

Composite windows are a suitable choice for homeowners that appreciate the look of wood windows but do not like the price tag or the time consuming maintenance that they require. Most composite replacement windows are constructed from PVC resin, making them very energy efficient. One of the features that attract homeowners to composite windows is the availability of paintable and stainable indoor wood laminate.

✔ Pros:

- Offers the warmer look of a wood window and a good fit for many historic homes
- Very good value for increased energy efficiency
- Offered in a range of colors and styles to allow customization
- Availability of paintable or stainable indoor laminate and veneers
- Maintenance free

✗ Cons:

- Limited number of manufacturers
- Composite windows generally come at a higher investment, although this varies
- Style options and upgrades come at a premium

Fiberglass

Fiberglass windows are a great option for many homeowners. Fiberglass replacement windows have the look of wood without the highly involved maintenance natural wood windows require. Because of their high tensile strength, fiberglass windows offer a high structural rating while providing a more slender frame that accommodates more glass and a thinner profile. Fiberglass is more thermally conductive than vinyl, and therefore offer slightly less energy efficiency than vinyl replacement windows. Also, although fiberglass windows offer many style options, these upgrades also typically come at a premium of approximately 1.5x that of vinyl windows. To be sure, that's a strong consideration for homeowners on a strict budget.

✔ Pros:

- Offers the warmer look of a wood window and a good fit for many historic homes
- Good value for increased energy efficiency
- Many manufacturers to select from and compare
- Maintenance free
- High tensile strength allows for strong, slender profile frame
- Colors, grid and hardware allow you increased style customization
- Some manufacturers offer an interior paintable, stainable wood or wood laminate

✗ Cons:

- Some manufacturers have limited aesthetic options
- Fiberglass windows come at a significantly higher investment
- Style options and upgrades come at a premium
- Does not offer the top end of energy efficiency currently available on the market

Wood

Wood windows are the most expensive option available for window replacement. For some homeowners, price is not an issue when they are going for architectural continuity or historical accuracy. In fact, in some homes that have been identified as historically significant, using certain conforming items like wood windows is required. Wood is beautiful, warm with an organic look and feel and they offer many aesthetic options to allow you to customize your replacement windows to fit the style of your home. On the downside, wood windows are very expensive at the outset and require somewhat expensive and time consuming maintenance. Likewise, may home owners considering replacement windows are doing so because their old wood windows have failed. Wood windows generally have a shorter lifespan, and thus, a shorter warranty period.

✔ Pros:

- Offers the warm look of wood and a good fit for many historic homes or where HOAs require wood windows
- Offer good value for increased energy efficiency
- Nice exterior architectural details
- Grid and hardware allow you increased style customization
- Attractive historically accurate option for many homes

✗ Cons:

- Quality wood windows are very expensive
- Maintenance is very labor & price intensive
- Most new windows are made from fast growth timber with open fibers that are more prone to draw in water and rot
- Shorter lifespan and warranty
- Color and cladding options are limited

Aluminum

Aluminum windows are frequently used in multi-family residences like condominiums and apartment buildings, and are common in commercial buildings. Because of this and their lower energy efficiency, many homeowners in single-family residences have opted to replace their aluminum windows with more aesthetic options that also have higher rated energy efficiency. Still, aluminum windows offer some advantages that make them a good fit for many dwellings. Aluminum windows offer exterior finishes that are highly durable and have a slim profile maximizing the amount of glass surface area. Additionally, aluminum replacement windows have a clean, contemporary look that works with many different architectural styles. Because aluminum is very stable in extremes of both heat and moisture, they are appropriate for beach and desert climates.

✔ Pros:

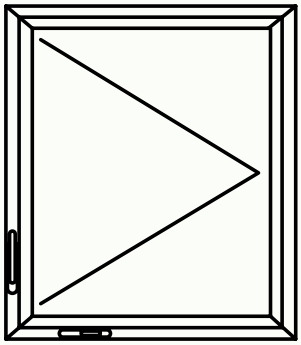
- Durable exterior finishes
- Slender profile with clean, modern look
- Very durable and maintenance free
- Stable in variable temperature and high moisture climates

✗ Cons:

- Can be considerably more expensive than other options
- Low energy and thermal performance
- Thermal barrier issues
- Limited style options and upgrade options
- Low architectural appeal for some homeowners

Understanding Your Window Style Options

There are many different window styles to maximize the beauty, comfort and energy efficiency of your home. Whether you choose to replace a window in your home with one of the same style or you choose to modify the current window opening to accommodate a new configuration, a qualified contractor will provide you with the benefits and costs of each. This picture guide highlights the most commonly selected options.



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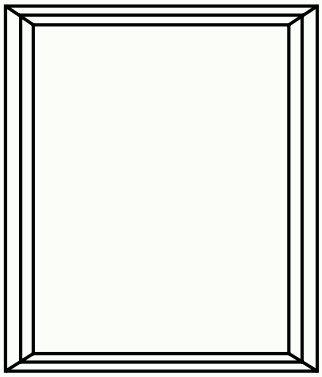
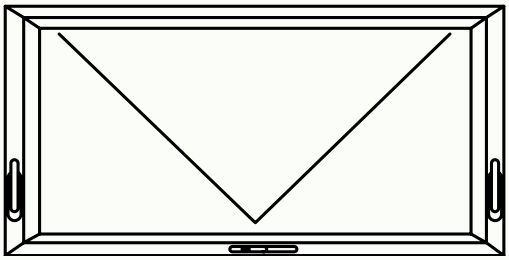


PICTURE



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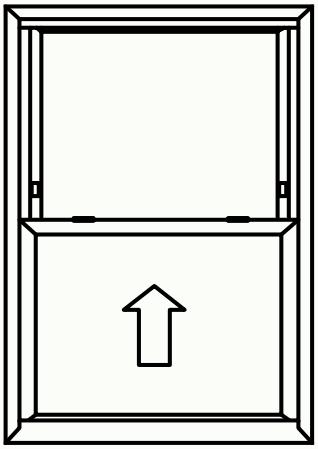
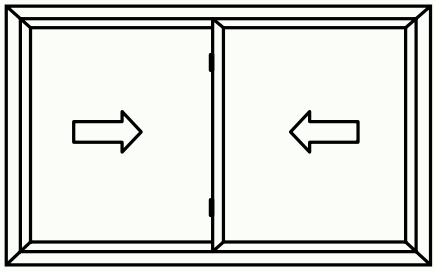
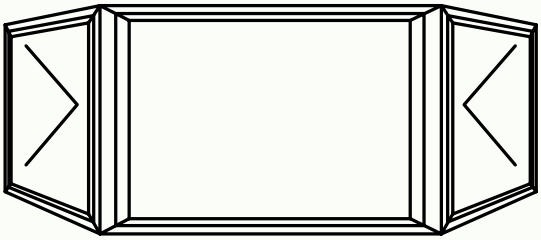


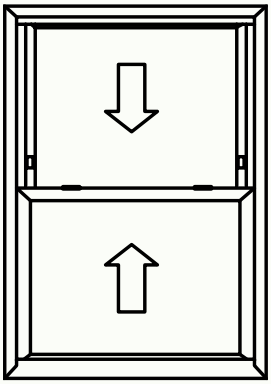
SINGLE HUNG



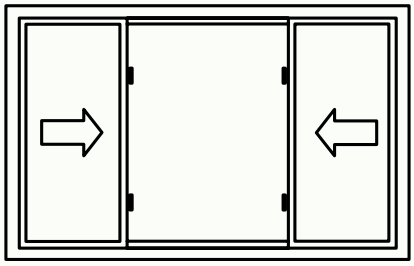
DOUBLE SLIDER



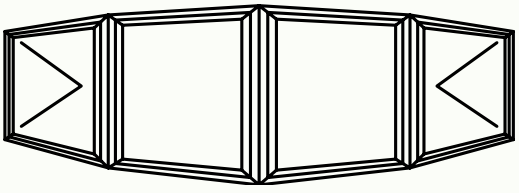
BAY



DOUBLE HUNG



TRIPLE SLIDER



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Understanding Your Asthetic Options

Replacement windows will add value and curb appeal to your home. In addition to window types, there are style and color choices to give you more options for your desired look. The following options should be considered based on the desired look and budget of the replacement window project:

Color

The majority of vinyl windows are available in white, which is widely appreciated for its clean look and the way it "pops" against a variety of home exterior materials. Custom exterior color is available in some replacement window types, but can significantly add to the cost of the window. However, custom color can increase curb appeal and make a home look unique and custom. At times, Homeowner Association (HOA) requirements and historical designations dictate a specific color for the exterior of the window, making colored exteriors a necessary expense. There are many different exterior and interior color options available for homeowners.

Note: Depending on the window manufacturer, it is recommended that all colored windows be fitted with full screens. This is done to ensure no white is visible, as the tracks are sometimes not colored. Be sure to clarify this prior to purchase.

Hardware

Standard hardware with vinyl replacement windows is white. Some premium manufacturers offer a variety of reasonably priced hardware upgrades that are attractive and fashionable, such as: brushed nickel, oil rubbed bronze and antique brass. For a relatively low per unit price increase, hardware customization will add a high-end look and feel to your home.

Obscure

Obscure glass – also known as privacy glass – is frosted or ground. This type of glass transmits light, yet does not allow a view of objects on the other side. This option is relatively affordable and often used in bathrooms where privacy is paramount. If installed in a conventionally small space, you may not want or need to cover these windows with curtains or blinds. While there is an upgrade cost associated with privacy glass, the additional expense is often deferred by the absence of additional window treatments.

Oriel or Cottage

An oriel or cottage window is a double hung window where the top portion is larger than the bottom portion, or vice versa. Most manufacturers offer this in a 40/60% or 60/40% configuration. This relatively reasonably priced upgrade will add a distinctive look to your home, increase curb appeal and is sometimes required by a HOA guidelines.

Simulated Divided Lights

Simulated divided lights (SDLs) give an authentic divided glass look without the added complication and expense of many smaller, individually cut pieces of glass. SDL bars are permanently adhered to the outside surface of the glass with a spacer bar between the panes of glass. This application does make cleaning more difficult, but is considered a desirable upgrade to grid bars located in between the panes of glass. SDLs are paintable or stainable as well, helping homeowners achieve a custom look. SDLs are often required in historical applications and they come at a significantly higher investment. When considering this option, be sure to ask your window professional if the SDLs are mounted on the portion of the window facing the inside of the home, the outside of the home or both.

Grids

Grids are a great way to get the look of a divided glass window or SDL without the hefty price increase. An additional benefit of internal grids is that they are easier to clean, as the grid is between the panes of glass which creates a smooth glass surface. Most manufacturers offer both flat and contoured internal grids to mimic the pattern of SDLs for a fraction of the cost. It is not uncommon for a HOA to require a specific grid type or pattern, so double check all regulations and requirements to be sure your window selection conforms.

Full Screens

Typically for a small investment, homeowners have the option to upgrade from the standard half screen to a full screen. The benefit of a full screen lies mainly with better ventilation by raising the lower sash and lowering the upper sash without losing protection from insects. Some homeowners also prefer the “finished” look of a full screen.

Understanding Your Safety & Sound Control Options

When it comes to safety and sound control, the following glass options should be condsiered:

TEMPERED GLASS

Tempered glass is a type of safety glass manufactured with thermal or chemical treatments to increase its strength as compared to normal glass. Tempering creates balanced internal stresses, which will cause the glass to crumble into small granular chunks instead of splintering into dangerous, jagged shards, should the glass break.

Where is tempered glass generally used?

- For the added safety benefits in stairwells, bathrooms, and windows with proximity to the floor
- In homes with small children
- As required by local building codes, of which any reputable contractor will be familiar

LAMINATED GLASS

Laminated glass is also a type of safety glass that holds together when shattered. When laminated glass is broken, it is held in place by an interlayer between its two or more layers of glass. The interlayer keeps the layers of glass bonded even when broken, and its high strength prevents the glass from breaking into large, sharp, lethal pieces.

Laminated glass has the added benefit of providing significant sound control as well. In urban areas, laminated glass can be utilized to reduce outdoor noise with very good efficacy.

Where is laminated glass generally used?

- Where there is a possibility of human impact, such as car windshields
- Where the glass could fall if shattered, such as skylight glazing
- In regions requiring hurricane-resistant construction
- Where reducing noise is required, as the PVB interlayer provides a much higher sound isolation rating
- Where UV radiation is an issue, as it will block up to 99% of incoming UV radiation

Understanding Your Energy Efficiency Options

Your home's windows will always be the thermal weak point in a wall assembly as compared to the insulated wall materials, but newer high-tech energy saving options can help you get optimal efficiency which will save you big money on utilities down the road. Consider the following upgrades and options to maximize the energy efficiency of your preferred replacement windows:

Multiple Panes of Glass

Double-pane glass filled with inert gas insulates nearly twice as well as single-pane counterparts, making replacing your old single pane glass windows a no-brainer.

Triple-pane glass offers the maximum insulation. Triple Pane will increase the overall efficiency of the window unit and decrease the rate of energy loss or U Factor (the measurement of how much energy escapes your house through the glass). However, triple pane glass comes at a premium and varies in cost ranging from $50-$200 per window, depending upon the manufacturer.

Often, triple pane windows are used on the side of the house with a southern exposure to reduce the impact of the brutal afternoon sun. The added cost in that instance may be worth it and should be considered to maximize energy efficiency, particularly in areas with excessive heat or homes with extensive southern exposure.

Low-E Glass Coatings

Low-Emissivity (Low-E) glass coatings are layers of thermal protection that aid in reflecting summer heat and retaining interior cooling in the summer months and reflecting cool outdoor temperatures and retaining interior warmth in the winter months. Likewise, these Low-E coatings will block UV rays that can contribute to the fading your home's soft furnishings such as drapes, curtains, sofas and carpets.

Argon Filled Glass Panes

Argon is a natural, inert, colorless, non-toxic gas that is denser than air. When placed between panes of glass, argon adds additional insulation. This feature can further reduce the transfer of heat or cold, making a home significantly more energy-efficient and comfortable.

ENERGY STAR Certified Replacement Windows

When you select energy-efficient options that meet or exceed ENERGY STAR® guidelines, you can be confident that you will save significantly on your energy bills.

Foam-Fill

Foam filled frames and sashes reduce the thermal conduction of the frame or sash. Many manufacturers offer foam filled frames and sash extrusions that can increase the efficiency of those components.

Quality Installation

High quality replacement windows are only as effective and efficient as their installation. For example, the best performing window on the market, if installed incorrectly or out of scope of best practices, will leak air like a sieve. Consequently, taking the time to find a reputable home improvement contractor with a solid reputation in replacement window installation is a must.

Understanding Window Performance and Terms

Many homeowners have questions about how to compare the performance of different windows. With so much information available and manufacturers all making claims that their product is best, it is easy to be overwhelmed by all the numbers. Consumers find it difficult to make meaningful comparisons between window lines as they sort out the various ratings that are used to indicate window performance.

We recommend looking to the National Fenestration Rating Council (NRFC) and the American Architectural Manufacturers Association (AAMA) for guidance. They both provide accurate information to measure and compare energy performance of windows, doors and skylights. They administer the uniform, independent rating and labeling system for the energy performance of windows, doors, skylights, and attachment products. Their goal is to provide fair, accurate, and reliable energy performance ratings so that:

- Architects, builders, code officials, contractors, homeowners, and others can compare different products and make informed product choices.
- Building officials, state government employees, and others involved in code development and enforcement can determine if products meet local codes.
- Government and utility-run energy efficiency programs can establish performance requirements and standards.
- Manufacturers have a fair and level playing field to compare products and an accurate method of showing the energy benefits of new designs or technology.

So what specific metrics are measured to compare window performance, and what should you know about each?
We have compiled a list of the most notable window performance metrics for your review.

U-Factor

U-factor measures how well a product prevents heat from escaping. The rate of heat loss is indicated in terms of the U-factor (U-value) of a window assembly. U-Factor ratings generally fall between 0.20 and 1.20. The insulating value is indicated by the R-value, which is the inverse of the U-value. The lower the U-value, the greater a window's resistance to heat flow and the better its insulating value. In terms of performance, windows with lower U-Factors help to keep a home warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

Solar Heat Gain Coefficient

Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) measures how well a product blocks heat caused by sunlight. The SHGC is the fraction of incident solar radiation admitted through a window, either directly or absorbed and subsequently released inward. SHGC is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. The lower a window's solar heat gain coefficient, the less solar heat it transmits.

In a desert climate, consumers require a low SHGC so that the brutal afternoon sun will not overheat the home. In cooler climates such as the Mid-Atlantic or Northeast, consumers spend more energy dollars heating their home than cooling it. Therefore, they often choose a window with a more moderate or higher SHGC that will allow the sun's rays to warm their home during winter months.

Visible Transmittance

Visible Transmittance (VT) measures how much light comes through a product. The visible transmittance is an optical property that indicates the amount of visible light transmitted. VT is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. The higher the VT, the more light is transmitted.

A typical piece of clear, annealed glass has a VT of .93, meaning 93% of the light that hits the glass passes through. Add a second lite, and the VT goes down to about 88%. These are general figures because different types of glass can vary. When tints are added to the glass, or coatings such as Low-E are applied, the VT can also be affected.

Air Leakage

Air Leakage (AL) is indicated by an air leakage rating expressed as the equivalent cubic feet of air passing through a square foot of window area (cfm/sq ft). Heat loss and gain occur by infiltration through cracks in the window assembly. The lower the AL, the less air will pass through these cracks.

Condensation Resistance

Condensation Resistance (CR) measures the ability of a product to resist the formation of condensation on the interior surface of that product. The higher the CR rating, the better that product is at resisting condensation formation. While this rating cannot predict condensation, it can provide a credible method of comparing the potential of various products for condensation formation. CR is expressed as a number between 0 and 100. This is an optional field on the NRFC rating sticker and many manufacturers do not include it.

Design Pressure or Performance Grade

The DP rating of a window or door is based on laboratory pressure testing in pounds per square foot or psf. Design pressure requirements can vary as they are based on product location on the building, height of the building, density of buildings, and wind zone designation. The positive DP number is the standard for wind blowing at the building (windward) and the negative DP number represents the vacuum pressure on the opposite side of the building (leeward). This value is particularly important for homes in a hurricane zone, and building codes strictly enforce minimum requirements.

Structural Test Pressure = 1.5 x Design Pressure

Structural is tested at 150% of DP rating. The structural rating of a window is as much about the glass as it is about the frame and sash system. In order to get a higher DP rating the window manufacturer has to consider the thickness and possible heat-strengthening (or tempering) of the glass as well as the use of higher-end hardware and good quality sealants in the frame and sash system.

Sound Transmission Class

Basically, Sound Transmission Class (STC) ratings are an established way to average how much sound is stopped by traveling through a material. STC ratings are used for windows, doors, walls and most building materials. For windows, STC ratings range from 18 to 50. The STC Ratings for double paned windows generally vary from 28 to 35. Take air seals out of the equation, and most of the variation is due to the glass thickness and the amount of air space between the glass. The bigger air space and thicker glass is preferred, as the result is better sound proofing.

The Windows on Washington Window Performance Reference Guide

Feeling overwhelmed by all the numbers, ratings, metrics and acronyms associated with window performance? Use *The Windows on Washington Window Performance Reference Guide* and take the guesswork out of the equation. Here, we explain the meaning of each term and the values we recommend to our customers to ensure they choose high quality, energy efficient windows.

U Factor — **.28 or lower for Double Pane, .21 for Triple Pane**

Measures how much energy (heat) travels through the glass. As the primary thermal rating, this number essentially tells you how well the window insulates. The total unit U Factor should be used for comparison.

Air Infiltration (AI) — **.05 or lower**

Measures the amount of air able to lead through a window assembly.

Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) — **.25 or higher for colder climates**

Measures how much external heat caused by sunlight is transferred through the glass. In dessert climates, a low SHGC is desirable. In colder climates, a higher SHGC is desirable.

Visible Transmittance (VT) — **.50 or higher for Double Pane, .40 or higher Triple Pane**

Measures the amount of light that is transferred through the glass.

Condensation Resistance (CR) — **65 or higher**

Measures a window's ability to resist condensation.

Design Pressure (DP) — **50 or higher**

Measures the structural integrity of a window unit. Strongly regulated by code in storm zones.

Visit our website at www.windowsonwashington.net for more information on replacement windows and all your exterior home improvement projects.

Choosing the Right Contractor

Home improvement contractors are not all the same. It is important to prequalify the contractor you choose to replace your windows to make sure the job gets done right the first time. Doing your homework at the outset will save you hours of unnecessary stress and potentially thousands of dollars later. Some of the key things to look out for include:

- ☐ **Detailed, written proposal with descriptions of the product, materials, work scope, specifications and cost, along with approximate project starting and completion dates**
- ☐ **Contractor should be able to clearly lay out his project supervision and quality-control procedures, installation teams, estimated project completion time and payment procedures**
- ☐ **Must have a permanent place of business, telephone number, tax id number & business license**
- ☐ **Licensed and bonded**
- ☐ **Insure the contractor is financially stable**
- ☐ **Proof of insurance - liability coverage & workers' compensation certificates**
- ☐ **Contractor demonstrates a commitment to professionalism with appropriate industry associations**
- ☐ **Company has proven track record, client references & a list of completed projects**
- ☐ **Contractor is licensed or approved installer with the window manufacturer**
- ☐ **Check with Better Business Bureau or Department of Professional Regulation for possible complaints filed against the contractor**
- ☐ **Strong contract & window warranties offered**

Low Bids

No one wants to pay more than they have to, especially when it is a significant investment like replacement windows for your home. It cannot be stressed enough, you need to understand the nature of low bids. A low bid can look really tempting and it might be substantially lower than other bids from your professional window replacement contractors. The simple truth is, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Replacement windows are expensive because the hard cost of the materials, the trained, professional labor required in a proper installation and the insurance required to cover workers and protect contractors and homeowners from litigation.

Fly-by-Night Contractors

Many fly-by-night contractors are uninsured and work with cheap, untrained and ill-supervised laborers. They will often use your home's windows as a training exercise to figure out how to replace windows and will return mid-job demanding for more money to finish a job that is not correct to begin with. By shopping professional, established home improvement contractors, getting multiple estimates from companies with a proven track record, and weighing your window options, you will have beautiful replacement windows, professionally installed at a fair price that adds value and comfort to your home.

Pre-Installation Preparation Expectations and Checklist

You have found a reputable contractor you feel good about and set the appointment. Before you meet, think about the replacement window features that are important to you, how long you plan to live in your home and your budget range. Make sure you are aware of any HOA requirements or historical designations that might affect which window choices are available to you.

Once you have decided to replace your existing windows and chosen the replacement window type, style and options, precise measurements will be taken and a pre-inspection of your windows will take place. You have found your professional installer, selected the windows and agreed upon a price and schedule. Take a breath. The hard part is over!

So What Should You Expect From Your Installation And How Should You Prepare?

1. Confirm Details

The day before your replacement window installers arrive, it is a good idea to touch base with the salesperson or scheduler and confirm your installation date and time.

2. Clear Area Around Windows

Your team of expert window installers will need easy access to all areas around your windows, so it is a good idea to remove all wall hangings and clear away belongings. Make sure your blinds and draperies are removed from the windows and all furniture has been moved at least 3 feet away, giving your installer ample work space.

3. Secure and Supervise Kids and Pets

Any pets you have should be secured or left with family or friends for the day. With installers coming in and out of your home removing windows and bringing in supplies, your pet could get outside. Likewise, make sure any children will be continuously supervised and out of the way. Any large home improvement project offers the opportunity for children to come into contact with materials that could pose a danger.

4. Conduct a Brief Walk-Thru

On the day of your installation; touch base with your job foreman or installation leader. This is a good time to do a short walk through to highlight any areas of concern. This is a good opportunity to discuss how the project will flow, confirm that the replacement windows are exactly as you ordered and how to handle any out of scope repairs.

5. Let the Installation Proceed, But Stay Available For Questions

Some mess is to be expected during a window replacement project. However, your window installers should take reasonable precautions to avoid damage to your flooring and furnishings, such as having drop cloths inside your home under the windows. As the installers begin the process of removing your old windows, stay available in case they have questions or run into out-of-scope issues. Most installers will move the old windows to the outside of your home, so expect to see them stack up. Most professional window replacement contractors will include disposal and clean up as part of your project.

6. If the Project Requires More Than One Day, Have the Contractor Cover Any Window Spaces

Depending upon the size of the project and the number of installers required to perform the work, a window replacement will typically take one to two days. If your project is large enough to require an additional day, ask your contractor to make sure that each window space is covered.

7. Conduct a Final Inspection

When the replacement windows have been set in place, the team will likely begin installing the exterior trim or cladding on your windows. After completion, your team of professional replacement window installers should clean up after themselves, removing any debris, tools and materials. At this point, do thorough inspection of each window and request a demonstration on how to operate and clean the new units.

Pre-Installation Checklist

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Confirm Details
- ☐ Clear Area Around Windows
- ☐ Secure and Supervise Kids and Pets
- ☐ Conduct a Brief Walk-Thru
- ☐ Let the Installation Proceed, But Stay Available For Questions
- ☐ If the Project Requires More Than One Day, Have the Contractor Cover Any Window Spaces
- ☐ Conduct a Final Inspection

End of Project Checklist

The end of project checklist is critical to go through with your installer to verify that all of your contracted work is complete and meets your satisfaction. You need to check each window individually, as most small problems can be fixed immediately while the installers are still there instead of making another appointment.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Verify that interior and exterior caulking is complete around the entire window and neat.**
- ☐ **Make sure external trim meets the agreed upon standards.**
- ☐ **Double check the functionality of the windows; make sure that all open and close properly.**
- ☐ **Have the installer show you how to operate the windows for cleaning.**
- ☐ **Verify that all hardware is correct and in working order.**
- ☐ **Verify that you are happy with the clean up and that no debris, tools or materials remain in or around the work area.**
- ☐ **Gather your receipts and warranty.**
- ☐ **Read through the manufacturer information regarding cleaning and maintenance.**

If you have any questions about your windows or their proper care, a solid, professional replacement window installer will be happy to answer them.

Summary

Return on Investment (ROI)

Chosen carefully and installed properly, you should never have to replace your home's windows again. Replacement windows offer one of the most substantial returns on investment (ROI) of any home improvement project. According to Remodeling Magazine, the ROI is 70-95% when selling your home, depending on your geographical location. The ongoing energy savings you will enjoy are an additional bonus.

Replacement windows are a great way to maintain the look and optimal functioning of your home. Quality replacement windows installed by a reputable and experienced home improvement contractor will offer you as a homeowner significant energy savings, temperature comfort, zero or minimal maintenance and a home that looks beautiful inside and out.

Windows on Washington Is Home Improvement You Can Trust

Windows on Washington is a locally owned and operated company focused on improving the energy efficiency and appearance of our clients' homes. Our company was founded on a simple philosophy: be upfront and honest. Many home improvement companies force homeowners to sit through three hour sales presentations and then close with high-pressure tactics to make the sale. We created a better way to do business.

At Windows on Washington, we work with our clients the way we want to be treated in our own homes - knowledgeably, professionally, and respectfully. We take the time to listen to your home improvement needs and then create a solution using best-in-class products coupled with our expert installation techniques.

Whether you are looking for energy efficient replacement windows, beautiful siding, gutters, a new roof, or money saving insulation and air sealing, we are your answer. We will educate you on our approach to your project, explain your options and encourage you to do additional research. There is no obligation, pressure, or hidden charges.

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