



How to Find the Right Replacement Windows

Replacing old windows is often a worthwhile investment for homeowners. Energy-efficient windows can prevent heating and cooling loss and keep homes more comfortable throughout the year. Such windows also can improve a home's resale value, proving a good return on investment for homeowners who want to upgrade their homes before putting them on the market.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, homeowners might find it more cost-effective to replace very old and/or inefficient windows to improve their energy efficiency. Such an upgrade can save homeowners substantial amounts of money on heating and cooling costs.

Window replacement projects can be costly, so it pays to get the job right the first time. Before beginning a window replacement project, homeowners should research which windows will meet their specific needs, learning the subtleties between finishes and features, as well as comparing prices for the windows and installation.

Choose the right time of year

The best time of year to plan window replacement is when the weather will be warm, ideally in the spring or early summer. However, homeowners do not want conditions to be too warm, as each room where new windows will be installed will temporarily be exposed to the elements. Furthermore, caulk adheres better in warmer weather and will

dispense easily.

Consider available features

When replacing windows, homeowners may want to install the same style windows they currently have. But the problems that led to the need to replace windows may still exist even when new windows are installed. When replacing windows, consider energy performance ratings based on the locations of the windows in the house. To make sure they make the most educated decision, homeowners can investigate the solar heat gain coefficient, U-factor, visible transmittance and light-to-solar gain. Explanations of these ratings are available at Energy.gov.

Don't ignore maintenance needs

Maintenance costs involved with cleaning, repairs and painting can add up. When shopping for windows, consider the amount of maintenance they will need. Wood-framed windows may require more upkeep than aluminum, fiberglass or vinyl. Also, consider if certain window types, such as double-hung windows, casement windows, awning windows, or slider windows, would be practical.

Keep home style in mind

A poor match between windows and the style of the home can produce unwanted changes in the appearance of the home. Replacement windows should match the style and appearance desired.

Expect minimal disruption

When homeowners hire professionals who are good at their craft, window replacement projects should not be a terrible inconvenience. According to American Window Products, Inc., seasoned professionals will be able to complete a replacement window upgrade in a short amount of time depending on the size of the home and the number of windows being replaced.

Replacing windows can be a costly task, but one that will provide a more energy efficient home that can help homeowners save money in the long run.



Replacement windows can be a smart investment in comfort and design appeal of a home.

Reduce Radon in Your Home

Radon is an odorless, invisible gas that may be lurking in homes even if homeowners are unaware of its presence. Although it is a naturally occurring substance, radon has the potential to cause serious illness. Therefore, its detection and reduction are paramount.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Surgeon General's Office have estimated that as many as 20,000 lung cancer deaths are caused each year by radon, which is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. The EPA further notes that many homes are in radon danger areas. Nearly one in three homes checked in seven states and on three lands designated for Native Americans had screening levels over 4 pCi/L, the EPA's recommended action level for radon exposure. According to Air Chek, Inc., a radon testing resource, a radon level of 4 pCi/l is equal to approximately 35 times as much radiation as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission would allow if a person was standing next to the fence of a radioactive waste site.

Testing can determine if radon is present in a home. Homeowners can rely on professional companies or purchase self-testing kits at home improvement retailers. If a test comes back positive for high levels, conduct a follow-up test before taking any measures to fix the problem. Unusual weather can increase radon levels. If repeat testing yields the same results, efforts to reduce radon levels are necessary.

Homeowners must keep in mind that no two situations are the same and various techniques may be necessary to reduce radon levels in a home. Simply opening the windows in a home may not be enough, and many radon remedies require the skilled services of professional contractors who are experienced in radon reduction procedures. Homes can be fixed, but some instances may be best left to the professionals.

One of the most popular methods of reducing radon concentrations involves a process called active soil depressurization, or ASD. This is a cost-effective and reliable technique to reduce radon that involves capturing the radon from beneath a building before it can enter the dwelling. A venting system draws the radon gas from the soil beneath the foundation and exhausts it outside of the building far away from windows and other home openings. A continuously operating fan draws and discharges the radon outdoors.

Radon that has infiltrated water supplies may require other



Radon may be lurking beneath a home. Fortunately, there are many ways to reduce radon levels in a home.

removal methods. Such methods may require spraying water into a contained air space, introducing air bubbles into the water or storing water in a tank until the radon has decayed. Another method employs granular activated carbon (GAC) to remove radon from the water. The GAC method has been more widely tested and is more commonly used in individual homes, according to the EPA.

Because radon removal often requires a specific skill set, it is a job better left to professionals. Opening windows and allowing natural ventilation may help, but a more long-term approach to radon removal might be most appropriate.



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