

FREE PREMIUM DOWNLOAD

The Ultimate Window Buyer's Checklist

A homeowner's guide to comparing estimates, choosing the right windows, and avoiding costly mistakes.

Inside this guide

50 questions to ask contractors | Estimate comparison worksheet | Installation preparation checklist | Final walkthrough checklist | Warranty checklist

Presented by
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Welcome

Use this guide before you sign a contract, compare estimates, or choose a window contractor.

Replacing your windows is one of the most important improvements you can make to your home. New windows can improve comfort, reduce drafts, help with outside noise, improve curb appeal, increase natural light, and make your home feel cleaner and more updated.

But not all windows are the same, and not all window installations are the same. A proper estimate should clearly explain the window brand, frame material, glass package, installation method, warranty, labor, cleanup, and any additional work needed around the opening.

How to use this guide

Print this checklist or keep it open while meeting with window companies. Check items off, write notes, and use the worksheets to compare estimates side by side.

Important note: This guide is for homeowner education only. Every home is different. Final recommendations and pricing should come from a professional in-home consultation.

Checklist Sections

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1. Window Replacement Readiness Checklist

Check all that apply. If several items match your home, it may be time to schedule a professional window consultation.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ My windows are hard to open or close | ☐ My windows do not lock properly |
| ☐ I feel drafts near the windows | ☐ I hear too much outside noise |
| ☐ My home feels hot in the summer | ☐ My home feels cold in the winter |
| ☐ My energy bills seem higher than they should be | ☐ There is condensation between the glass panes |
| ☐ The frames are cracked, warped, damaged, or deteriorating | ☐ There is water damage around the windows |
| ☐ The windows look outdated | ☐ The screens are damaged or missing |
| ☐ The windows allow too much glare | ☐ Furniture, flooring, or curtains are fading from sun exposure |
| ☐ I want better curb appeal | ☐ I am preparing to sell or improve the value of my home |
| ☐ I want windows that are easier to clean and maintain | ☐ I still have old aluminum, single-pane, or poorly performing windows |

What this means

If you checked multiple boxes, your windows may be affecting comfort, security, curb appeal, and energy performance. A window specialist can inspect your current windows and explain whether replacement makes sense.

2. Homeowner Project Goals Worksheet

Before meeting with a contractor, write down what matters most to you.

My main reasons for replacing windows

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Improve energy efficiency | ☐ Make the home more comfortable |
| ☐ Reduce outside noise | ☐ Improve curb appeal |
| ☐ Update the look of the home | ☐ Increase home value |
| ☐ Replace damaged or old windows | ☐ Improve security |
| ☐ Make windows easier to operate | ☐ Reduce maintenance |
| ☐ Improve natural light | ☐ Reduce drafts |
| ☐ Prepare the home for resale | ☐ Improve rental property value |
| ☐ Match other home improvements | |

My biggest concern

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Price | ☐ Quality |
| ☐ Installation | ☐ Warranty |
| ☐ Financing | ☐ Timeline |
| ☐ Choosing the right style | ☐ Choosing the right company |
| ☐ Avoiding pushy salespeople | ☐ Understanding the estimate |

Project goals

Rooms that need windows

Preferred timeline

Budget range, if known

3. Window Style Checklist

Different rooms may need different window styles. Use this overview to discuss options during your consultation.

Style	How it works	Common uses
Single-hung	Bottom sash moves up and down.	Bedrooms, hallways, living rooms, traditional homes
Double-hung	Top and bottom sashes can move.	Two-story homes, bedrooms, easy-cleaning needs
Horizontal slider	One side slides open horizontally.	Wider openings, bedrooms, kitchens, modern homes
Picture window	Fixed glass that does not open.	Views, natural light, high walls, living rooms
Casement	Opens outward with a crank.	Kitchens, bathrooms, hard-to-reach areas
Awning	Hinged at the top and opens outward.	Bathrooms, kitchens, ventilation with privacy
Bay or bow	Projection-style window that extends outward.	Living rooms, dining rooms, front elevations
Garden	Projecting window often used for plants or decor.	Kitchens and breakfast areas
Sliding patio door	Large sliding glass door for indoor-outdoor access.	Patios, backyards, balconies, family rooms

Style notes for my home

4. Window Count Worksheet

Use this worksheet before your appointment so the estimate can be prepared more efficiently.

Room	Window Type	Approx. Size	Opens?	Notes
Living Room				
Kitchen				
Dining Room				
Primary Bedroom				
Bedroom 2				
Bedroom 3				
Bathroom 1				
Bathroom 2				
Hallway				
Garage				
Patio Door				
Other				

Tip: You do not need exact measurements before an appointment. The contractor should take final measurements before ordering windows.

5. Glass and Energy Efficiency Checklist

The glass package is one of the most important parts of a replacement window.

Glass options to ask about

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Dual-pane glass | ☐ Triple-pane glass, if available |
| ☐ Low-E glass coating | ☐ Argon gas fill |
| ☐ Tempered safety glass where required | ☐ Laminated glass |
| ☐ Obscure or privacy glass | ☐ Tinted glass |
| ☐ Sound-reduction glass package | ☐ UV protection |
| ☐ Solar heat control | ☐ Grid patterns |
| ☐ Decorative glass options | |

Important performance terms

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ U-Factor | ☐ Solar Heat Gain Coefficient |
| ☐ Air infiltration rating | ☐ Visible transmittance |
| ☐ Condensation resistance | ☐ Energy performance labels |
| ☐ Manufacturer warranty | ☐ Glass breakage coverage, if available |

Questions to ask

1. What glass package is included in this estimate?
2. Is Low-E glass included or is it an upgrade?
3. Is argon gas included?
4. Will the glass help reduce heat transfer?
5. Will the glass help reduce outside noise?
6. Will the glass help protect flooring and furniture from fading?
7. Is tempered glass needed in any locations?
8. Are bathroom windows available with privacy glass?
9. Are there different glass options for different sides of the house?
10. What glass warranty is included?

6. Frame Material Checklist

Window frames affect durability, maintenance, appearance, and energy performance.

Frame Type	What to know
Vinyl	Low maintenance, does not require painting, good energy efficiency, popular for replacement windows, often a strong value.
Fiberglass	Strong frame material, lower expansion and contraction, good durability, often a higher price point.
Wood	Traditional appearance, can be painted or stained, higher maintenance, may need more upkeep over time.
Aluminum	Strong frame, common in older Southern California homes, usually less energy efficient than modern vinyl or fiberglass options.
Composite	Blended materials designed for strength and efficiency. Cost and quality vary by manufacturer.

Questions to ask

1. What frame material do you recommend for my home?
2. Why is that material the best choice?
3. How much maintenance will it need?
4. Does it need painting?
5. How does it perform in hot weather?
6. How strong is the frame?
7. What colors are available?
8. Will the frame match my home's style?
9. What warranty covers the frame?
10. How long should the frame last with proper care?

7. Installation Method Checklist

The quality of the installation is just as important as the quality of the window.

Important reminder

A great window installed poorly can still leak, draft, bind, or fail. Make sure the contractor explains exactly how your windows will be installed.

Ask which installation method is being used

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Retrofit installation | ☐ New construction installation |
| ☐ Nail-fin installation | ☐ Full-frame replacement |
| ☐ Stucco cut-back | ☐ Wood trim replacement |
| ☐ Interior trim replacement | ☐ Exterior trim replacement |

Questions to ask about installation

1. What installation method do you recommend for my home?
2. Why do you recommend that method?
3. Will the old frame remain or be removed?
4. Will the stucco be disturbed?
5. Will interior trim be disturbed?
6. Is any wood repair included?
7. What happens if hidden damage is found?
8. How will the window be sealed?
9. What type of caulking or sealant will be used?
10. Will the windows be insulated around the frame?
11. How will you protect my floors and furniture?
12. How long will installation take?
13. Will the crew clean up after the job?
14. Who handles disposal of the old windows?
15. Is final inspection included?

8. Contractor Qualification Checklist

Before hiring any window contractor, verify the basics.

Company information

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Company name is clearly stated | ☐ Physical business address is provided |
| ☐ Phone number is provided | ☐ Website is provided |
| ☐ Contractor license number is provided | ☐ Insurance information is available |
| ☐ Written estimate is provided | ☐ Product brand is listed |
| ☐ Warranty details are provided | ☐ Installation details are included |

Experience and reputation

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Company has window replacement experience | ☐ Company has local project experience |
| ☐ Company has reviews or testimonials | ☐ Company can explain the installation process |
| ☐ Company can answer product questions clearly | ☐ Company does not pressure you to sign immediately |
| ☐ Company provides a clear scope of work | ☐ Company explains what is included and excluded |
| ☐ Company offers a professional consultation | ☐ Company communicates clearly |

Questions to ask

1. Are you licensed?
2. Are you insured?
3. How long have you been installing replacement windows?
4. What window brands do you install?
5. Do you use your own installers or subcontractors?
6. Who will manage my project?
7. Who do I contact if I have questions?
8. What is your installation process?
9. What happens if there is a problem after installation?
10. Do you offer financing options?

9. The 50 Questions Every Homeowner Should Ask Before Buying Windows

Use these questions when meeting with any window company.

Company questions

1. How long has your company been in business?
2. Are you licensed to perform this work?
3. Are you insured?
4. Do you specialize in replacement windows?
5. Do you have experience with homes like mine?
6. Can you provide local references or reviews?
7. Who will be my point of contact?
8. Who will install the windows?
9. Are your installers trained on this window system?
10. How do you handle service issues after the job is complete?

Product questions

11. What window brand are you recommending?
12. Why do you recommend that brand?
13. What frame material is included?
14. What glass package is included?
15. Is Low-E glass included?
16. Is argon gas included?
17. Are screens included?
18. Are grids included or extra?
19. What colors are available?
20. What hardware options are available?

9. The 50 Questions Every Homeowner Should Ask

Continued

Energy and comfort questions

21. Will these windows help reduce drafts?
22. Will they help with outside noise?
23. Will they help reduce heat entering the home?
24. Will they help protect furniture and flooring from fading?
25. Are different glass options recommended for different sides of the home?
26. How do these windows perform in hot climates?
27. What ratings should I compare?
28. Are the windows energy efficient?
29. Will they improve indoor comfort?
30. Are there any rebate or financing options available?

Installation questions

31. What installation method will be used?
32. Will this be retrofit or full-frame replacement?
33. Will stucco, siding, or trim be affected?
34. How will the windows be sealed?
35. What happens if you find water damage or dry rot?
36. Is wood repair included in the estimate?
37. How long will installation take?
38. How many installers will be at my home?
39. How do I prepare before installation day?
40. Will you remove and dispose of the old windows?

Warranty and estimate questions

41. What manufacturer warranty is included?
42. What labor warranty is included?
43. Is glass breakage covered?
44. Is the warranty transferable?
45. What is excluded from the warranty?
46. Is the estimate itemized?
47. What exactly is included in the price?
48. What could increase the price later?
49. What payment options are available?
50. When can the project start?

10. Estimate Comparison Worksheet

Do not compare window estimates by price alone. Compare the full scope of what each company is offering.

Item	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
Company Name			
Sales Representative			
Phone Number			
License Provided?			
Window Brand			
Frame Material			
Glass Package			
Number of Windows			
Patio Doors Included?			
Installation Method			
Screens Included?			
Grids Included?			
Privacy Glass Included?			
Tempered Glass Included?			
Trim Work Included?			
Stucco Repair Included?			
Wood Repair Included?			
Disposal Included?			
Manufacturer Warranty			
Labor Warranty			
Financing Available?			
Estimated Start Date			
Estimated Completion Time			
Total Price			

11. Red Flags to Watch For

Be careful if you notice any of the following.

Sales red flags

- ☐ The salesperson pressures you to sign today
- ☐ You are told the price is only good right now
- ☐ The estimate does not list the window brand
- ☐ The contractor cannot explain the installation method
- ☐ The contractor will not provide license or insurance information
- ☐ The price changes dramatically during the appointment
- ☐ The company avoids giving details in writing
- ☐ The estimate does not explain the glass package
- ☐ The contractor avoids warranty questions
- ☐ The contractor gives vague answers about who performs the work

Product red flags

- ☐ No brand name listed
- ☐ No energy information explained
- ☐ No warranty documentation
- ☐ No explanation of tempered glass where needed
- ☐ No sample window shown
- ☐ No glass package listed
- ☐ No frame material explained
- ☐ Very limited color or style options
- ☐ No explanation of screens, grids, or hardware
- ☐ No written product specifications

Installation red flags

- ☐ Installation method is unclear
- ☐ No plan for protecting the home
- ☐ No disposal included
- ☐ No final walkthrough
- ☐ No project manager or contact person
- ☐ No explanation of sealing or waterproofing
- ☐ No cleanup process explained
- ☐ No plan for hidden damage
- ☐ No labor warranty
- ☐ No written timeline

12. Installation Preparation Checklist

Prepare your home so the crew can work safely and efficiently.

Before the crew arrives

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Remove curtains, blinds, or window coverings | ☐ Clear furniture away from windows |
| ☐ Remove fragile items near work areas | ☐ Remove wall decorations near windows |
| ☐ Clear outdoor access around windows | ☐ Move patio furniture if needed |
| ☐ Secure pets in a safe area | ☐ Make sure someone is available to provide access |
| ☐ Confirm appointment time | ☐ Confirm parking access for the crew |
| ☐ Ask how long the installation is expected to take | ☐ Ask whether alarm sensors need special handling |

Questions to confirm before installation

1. What time will the crew arrive?
2. Who is the crew leader?
3. How many windows will be installed each day?
4. Will I need to be home all day?
5. Will any power be needed?
6. Will the crew need access to bedrooms or bathrooms?
7. How will old windows be removed?
8. How will the home be protected?
9. How will cleanup be handled?
10. Who do I call if I have a question during installation?

13. Final Walkthrough Checklist

Before the project is complete, walk through the job with the contractor.

Check each window

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Window opens smoothly | ☐ Window closes smoothly |
| ☐ Window locks properly | ☐ Screens fit correctly |
| ☐ Glass is clean and undamaged | ☐ Frame is clean and undamaged |
| ☐ Caulking looks neat | ☐ Trim looks finished |
| ☐ No visible gaps | ☐ No loose parts |
| ☐ No damaged walls or stucco | ☐ No broken glass or debris left behind |
| ☐ Old windows were removed | ☐ Operation was explained |
| ☐ Warranty information was provided | |

Ask before final payment

1. Has every window been inspected?
2. Are all locks working?
3. Are all screens installed?
4. Is all cleanup complete?
5. Is there any touch-up work needed?
6. Do I have my warranty paperwork?
7. Do I know how to operate and clean the windows?
8. Who do I contact for service?
9. Is there anything I should avoid during the first 24 to 48 hours?
10. Is the project fully complete?

14. Warranty Checklist

A strong warranty can protect your investment, but only if you understand what it covers.

Ask about these warranty items

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Frame warranty | ☐ Glass warranty |
| ☐ Hardware warranty | ☐ Screen warranty |
| ☐ Labor warranty | ☐ Seal failure coverage |
| ☐ Glass breakage coverage | ☐ Transferability |
| ☐ Warranty registration | ☐ Service process |

Warranty questions

1. What does the manufacturer warranty cover?
2. What does the labor warranty cover?
3. How long does each warranty last?
4. What is excluded?
5. Is accidental glass breakage covered?
6. Is seal failure covered?
7. Is the warranty transferable if I sell my home?
8. Do I need to register the warranty?
9. Who handles warranty service?
10. How do I request service in the future?

15. Smart Buying Tips

Use these reminders before choosing a window company.

Do not buy based on price alone

The cheapest estimate may not include the same window, glass package, warranty, installation method, trim work, or service. A lower price may cost more later if the windows leak, fail, or are installed incorrectly.

Compare the full scope

Make sure each estimate explains the brand, frame material, glass package, installation method, warranty, labor, cleanup, and what happens if hidden damage is found.

Ask for everything in writing

Verbal promises are easy to forget. Your estimate should clearly explain the number of windows, styles, product brand, glass package, installation method, warranty, price, payment terms, and timeline.

Choose a contractor you trust

A good contractor should educate you, not pressure you. They should inspect your home carefully, answer questions clearly, and provide a written estimate that makes sense.

Key takeaway

You are not only buying windows. You are buying the product, installation, warranty, service, and long-term peace of mind.

16. Homeowner Notes Page

Use this page during estimate appointments.

Contractor Name

Representative

Phone

Appointment Date

Window Brand Recommended

Glass Package

Installation Method

Warranty

Total Estimate

What I liked

Concerns or questions

Follow-up needed

17. Final Decision Checklist

Before choosing a contractor, make sure you can check these boxes.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ I understand the window brand being installed | ☐ I understand the frame material |
| ☐ I understand the glass package | ☐ I understand the installation method |
| ☐ I know what is included in the price | ☐ I know what is not included in the price |
| ☐ I understand the warranty | ☐ I know who will install the windows |
| ☐ I know who to contact during the project | ☐ I understand the payment terms |
| ☐ I understand the expected timeline | ☐ I feel comfortable with the company |
| ☐ I have everything in writing | |

Final notes before signing

18. Schedule Your Free Window Estimate

Choosing the right windows does not have to be confusing.

At Family Home Improvements, we help homeowners understand their options, compare products, and choose replacement windows that fit their home, goals, and budget.

During your free in-home consultation, we can inspect your current windows, discuss your goals, explain window styles and glass options, review installation options, answer your questions, and provide a clear written estimate.

Ready to get started?

Schedule your free window estimate with Family Home Improvements.

Call: (562) 464-0684

Website: familyhomeimprovements.net

Thank you for downloading this guide. We hope it helps you make a confident, informed decision before replacing your windows.

Family Home Improvements

Helping Southern California homeowners improve comfort, curb appeal, and energy efficiency with quality replacement windows and professional installation.