Buyer Beware!!

Energy Efficient Windows

You've heard the expression "Buyer Beware!!"

Cowlitz PUD would like you to be aware that your best value in purchasing more efficient windows may be from contractors from the local area, including those on the PUD's Qualified Contractor's List. Some contractors from outside the local area are selling people energy efficient windows at exorbitant prices. In many cases these people tend to target the elderly. There have been instances where unscrupulous window contractors have charged up to $100 or more per square foot.

These high priced windows are no better or more efficient than vinyl windows purchased from reputable local window contractors. The typical cost for contractor-installed energy efficient vinyl windows with a U-factor of 0.30 or less, is between $18 and $23 per square foot.

Be particularly cautious of unsolicited window installers or sales people who contact you before you contact them. Any window vendor who says *"you must sign today or you will not get our special reduced price"* is almost always the highest priced window bidder.

We encourage you to get 2-3 bids on any window purchases before making any final decisions.

If you have questions about a bid you may have received for energy efficient windows, please call a Cowlitz PUD energy advisor at (360) 577-7514 or 1-800-631-1131.

COWLITZ COUNTY PUD

"CUSTOMER-OWNED for CUSTOMER BENEFIT"

The NFRC Window Label

The National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) energy performance label can help you determine how well a product will perform the functions of helping to cool your building in the summer, warm your building in the winter, keep out wind, and resist condensation. By using the information contained on the label, builders and consumers can reliably compare one product with another and make informed decisions about the windows, doors, and skylights they buy.

NFRC adopted a new energy performance label in 2005. It lists the manufacturer, describes the product, provides a source for additional information, and includes ratings for one or more energy performance characteristics.

NOTE: All energy performance values on the label represent the rating of windows/ doors as whole systems (glazing and frame).

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.

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 (both directly transmitted and 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 into the house.

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.

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 cracks in the window assembly.

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 rating is optional and manufacturers can choose not to include it.

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