



Checklist

2/25/2011

Most people buy replacement windows only once in their life. Because they require manufacturing lead time and installation, windows can be a complicated purchase that should involve careful review and consultation before a final decision is made. The two primary ingredients to a successful window purchase are the product itself and the professional installation of that product. Most homeowners simply trust their contractors to install the best window into their home. Sometimes this works — and sometimes it doesn't. With the expanding use of the internet, homeowners like you are now able to invest “shopping time” into determining what the best window is for their needs. In fact, just over the past few years, we have noticed a significant increase at Soft-Lite in the technical aspect of inquiries we receive from homeowners just like you. We welcome every single inquiry. Meanwhile, here are our suggestions for “un-biased” places to start your search for the best windows you can buy. Of course, we hope that your independent search brings you right back to Soft-Lite! We want to help you. Give us a call or send us a note!

Top Five Questions

To ask about the manufacturer of your windows:

1. How long have you been manufacturing these types of windows?
 - a. *Soft-Lite has been manufacturing windows since 1934, and was one of the first window manufacturers in the country to manufacture vinyl windows, beginning in the 1950's.*
2. What does your warranty cover?
 - a. *Our warranty covers any confirmed manufacturing defect. A replacement part will be furnished at no cost to you. Our warranty excludes labor and is transferable. See the warranty for more details.*
3. Are your products Gold-Label Certified by AAMA?
 - a. *Absolutely. Look to the inside head of every Soft-Lite window for the Gold Label decal. See the link below for information from the source as to what this means.*
4. Are your products tested by the NFRC and Energy Star compliant?
 - a. *Yes. Built with low-emissivity glass, all of our products meet or exceed Energy Star requirements in all 50 states.*
5. What awards and industry recognition has your company earned?
 - a. *Every year since 1996 Soft-Lite has been placed on Window & Door's Top 100 Manufacturers annual list, five-time Crystal Achievement Award, the Ohio Partnership for Excellence Award, Top 100 Companies to Watch, and other significant industry awards and recognition. See your Soft-Lite Dealer or contact us directly for more information.*

Top Five Questions

To ask about the window's certified performance:

1. Are these windows AAMA Gold-Label Certified?
2. What are the results of the air infiltration test?
3. What are the results of the water infiltration test?
4. What is the design pressure rating of this window?
5. What is the overall U-factor of this window as measured by the NFRC?

Top Five Questions

To ask about the design features of the window:

1. Tell me what makes your sill design better than the others.
 - a. *All of our double-hung models, for example, feature an engineered sloped sill that offers more barriers and diversions to air and water infiltration than conventional, lower-performance sills. There is a mechanical structural interlock that supplements the interlock at the meeting rail to hold the lower sash tightly in place, even during high-stress wind loads in excess of 190 miles per hour. A sill rail runs the length of the sill that is straddled by a soft rubber gasket under compression when the window is locked to block air and water from entering. Our sill dam is mortised directly into the jamb to assure no butt-joint leaks common to older sills where sealant is the only barrier. Optional Comfort Foam™ can be used to insulate the inside chambers of the sill for the ultimate energy efficiency.*
2. Tell me about your weather-stripping and compression seals.
 - a. *Our windows feature Triple-Fin weatherstrips that offer two or three times the barriers of single or double-fin designs. Each fin is compounded with Microban®, a popular anti-microbial treatment that fights the growth of mold and bacteria on the weather-stripping. Our closed-cell neoprene compression seals work under the pressure of the locked window much like the gaskets in refrigerators and freezers, to fight the transfer of energy in and out and to add yet more barriers and diversions to the penetration of air and water into your home.*
3. Does your window have mechanical interlocks and where are they?
 - a. *All of our windows feature mechanical interlocks at the meeting rail between the lock rail and the keeper rail. There is another mechanical structural interlock built into our sill design on some models.*
4. How tight are the manufacturing tolerances on your window?
 - a. *With our new Stürtz automated assembly lines, installed in late 2006, our overall manufacturing tolerances are the best in the business at $\pm 1/32$ ".*
5. How many options do I have available to me to customize your window?
 - a. *Internal grids, V-groove glass, tempered, laminated, triple pane, different spacer systems, art glass, internal laminates, external colors; consult your Soft-Lite Dealer or contact Soft-Lite directly for more information. Nobody Gives You More™.*

Top Five Questions

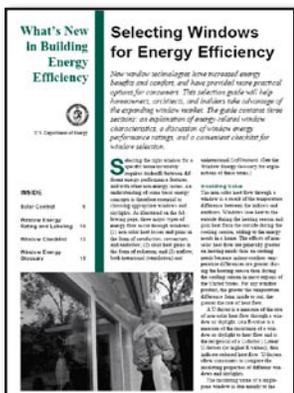
To ask about the installer of your windows:

1. What is the name of the installer who will be installing my windows?
2. Is he an employee or a subcontractor?
3. Are your installers Certified AAMA Installation Masters™?
4. How long have you been installing these windows?
5. What is your installation warranty that covers labor?

Here are selected independent internet sources that may help you as you learn more about the features and benefits of installing quality replacement windows in your home. At Soft-Lite Windows, we furnish these links to you because we want you to make the most informed buying decision you can make. We are here to help you along the way!

<http://windows.lbl.gov/pub/selectingwindows/window.pdf>

U.S. Department of Energy offers a comprehensive guide to the selection process for windows based upon energy efficiency.



<http://www.efficientwindows.org/>

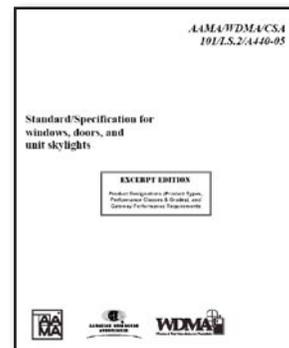
The Efficient Windows Collaborative offers generic technical comparisons between the different technologies available in windows today.

<http://www.vinylinfo.org/>

The Vinyl Institute website shares information about the plastics industry, including windows and doors and other building products.

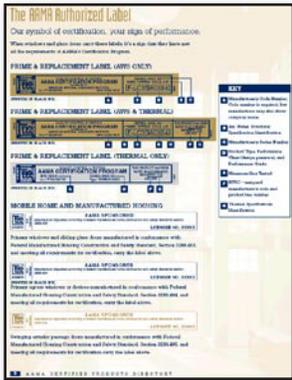
http://www.aamanet.org/upload/file/CMB-5-05_Excerpt.pdf

The American Architectural Manufacturers Association sets the rules for testing the performance of building products like windows. For those of you with technical aptitude, this link will reveal one such test that is frequently referenced in the window business as it measures air, water, and structural window performance. Call Soft-Lite for more details.



http://www.aamanet.org/upload/file/AAMA_Certification_Labels-3-10-05.pdf

The American Architectural Manufacturers Association verifies different classifications of product certification, with Gold Label the highest designation. This link explains the differences. Go to Home and learn more about this influential industry agency.



<http://www.aceee.org/>

The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy offers little specific information relating to windows, but it does afford a glimpse at the importance of making an effort to fight the waste of energy, which is a key buying appeal of high-performance replacement windows like you can buy from Soft-Lite.

<http://www.ase.org/>

The Alliance to Save Energy is another energy-specific site that offers insight to the benefits of replacement windows and other home improvement decisions that can reduce our dependence on foreign energy sources.

<http://www.installationmastersusa.com/>

Learn more about how professional installers can earn certification from the same independent agency (AAMA) that certifies our manufactured products.

<http://search.nfrc.org/search/searchDefault.aspx>

The National Fenestration Rating Council lists all certified results of every manufactured window it tests for Thermal Performance. This includes U-factor, Solar Heat Gain Coefficient, and Visible Transmittance.

<http://hes.lbl.gov/>

Home Energy Saver is the first web-based do-it-yourself energy audit tool.