

PRESS RELEASE

Top tips for buying replacement windows

When buying replacement windows for your home, there are a few things that you need to consider to ensure optimum performance and longevity.

Choosing replacement windows can be a bit overwhelming, as fenestration involves various technical aspects, building regulations, aesthetics and maintenance aspects that need to be understood in order to make the optimum purchase decision. Dylan Miller from leading wooden window and door manufacturer, Swartland, offers his expert advice to ensure that you're clued up before you make your choice.

Go green

"Making environmentally responsible choices is not just a way of saving money, but it is also a good choice for our future on this planet," says Dylan. Timber products are a great eco-friendly choice as wood is a sustainable and renewable resource. When sourcing environmentally friendly timber windows, ensure that you choose a company, such as Swartland, that is committed to protecting the environment – make sure that the timber is sourced from sustainably managed plantations, and look in to how environmentally responsible the manufacturing process is. "Swartland is proud of the way its products and practices reflect its vision to make a positive difference to people and the planet. At Swartland, we are aware that our own business sustainability is directly linked to the sustainability of the planet Earth, and in particular, to the sustainability of natural resources which forms such an important part of our existence as a company," says Dylan.

Stick to the rules

"Most people are not aware of the SANS 10400-XA National Building Regulations, which are crucial regulations to know when fitting new windows into a home," says Dylan. In short, these regulations ensure that houses are more energy efficient and better insulated, to help with the energy crisis in South Africa, and to ensure our building regulations are up to first world standards. Although these regulations have been around for some time already, lots of window manufacturers in South Africa are still selling non-compliant windows. When purchasing your replacement window it is important to ensure that you're buying from a trusted manufacturer that upholds these regulations, such as Swartland, as this will help you avoid any liabilities that can come with non-compliance. It will also ensure that your home is better insulated, making it more energy efficient and able to offer a more comfortable living experience.

Installation efficiency

Subframes are devices that will really help with installation when it comes to replacing windows. "Made from PVC-U, the sub frame system makes fitting windows simple, accurate and hassle-free. These systems provide the most effective way to seal window cavities, creating a rigid template for the surrounding bricks. The tight fit ensures the best thermal performance and it also forms a convenient barrier against condensation and mould

growth. The subframe system provides architects and builders a fast, hassle-free installation method that will greatly improve overall build quality.

A quick fit

When replacing windows you really want to minimise the amount of effort and time that is taken to install the windows. Fortunately, Swartland's innovative Ready-2-Fit range ensures that all windows are pre-glazed and pre-sealed before they leave the factory, meaning the only thing left to be done is the installation. The Ready-2-Fit range really takes the hassle out of window replacement, as well as minimising any possible damage to the fenestration products on the building site, and ensuring that all fenestration products used are compliant with all necessary building regulations.

Get some clarity

"Another choice that will have to be made when buying replacement windows is the different type of glazing options that are available," says Dylan. Not only does glass let light in whilst keeping the weather out, but it also allows us to enjoy the surrounding views, connecting us with the outside world whilst in the comfort and safety of our own abode. Apart from its transparency, glass offers many other desirable qualities, including protection, safety, security, solar and sound control, UV-protection, decoration and insulation. Says Dylan: "Today, there is a fast growing appreciation of the latest concepts in 'Green Building' principles. It therefore follows that more and more people are looking for glazing that is energy efficient. There is a wide range of glass that ensures optimum indoor-comfort levels in terms of solar control, thermal insulation, reduction of glare, and the preservation of outdoor views – all elements that are consistent with going green."

Minimising maintenance

All windows require some maintenance, so it is important to see what kind of maintenance will be required before you make your purchase choice. Timber windows require a little more maintenance compared to the other materials, but this can be a quick and easy process if you know what treatment to use. Dylan recommends Maxicare Low Maintenance Sealant, which is a water-based sealant that has been formulated for use on all interior and exterior wooden joinery: "There are a number of benefits associated with using Maxicare, namely the fact that it is German engineered, eco-friendly, quick drying with low VOC levels, and UV inhibitors to protect against sun damage, and is able to seriously minimise the time required for proper maintenance. By using Maxicare Water Base Sealant, you can maintain your wood using the newly launched Wash & Wipe Wood Maintenance Kit, which is exceptionally easy and quick to apply and doesn't require any sanding.

Hot and cold

We are all aware of the amount of heat that can be lost and gained through windows, especially in South Africa, where we experience harsh weather changes, from very hot to very cold. "While we can't stop the fact that a lot of heat energy is gained or lost through windows, there are choices that can be made to lessen the heat gain or loss that occurs. Windows with double glazing remain one of the most functional solutions in this regard," explains Dylan. Double glazing consists of two panes of glass with a small air pocket in-

between to improve their insulation ability. This system plays a huge role in controlling the temperature in our homes, and can save a lot of money when it comes to the expense of running heating and cooling systems. Double glazing also has the added bonus of resisting condensation and increasing noise reduction.

Dylan says that Swartland's Supreme double-glazed windows are in fact the most energy efficient tested windows on the market: "An independent test by the South African Fenestration and Insulating Energy Rating Association (SAFIERA) showed that Swartland's double-glazed windows are currently the most energy efficient windows in South Africa. Which is great news for homeowners who not only want the best quality and energy efficient windows in their home, but who also don't want to compromise on beautiful aesthetics." He says that although Swartland's double-glazed windows cost approximately two-and-a-half times more than similar single-glazed counterparts, it is important to remember that they can reduce the money you spend on heating in winter and cooling in summer your home by as much as 50%, and so over the course of their lifespan, they will end up paying for themselves a number of times over.

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