



## WHY SHOULDN'T I REPLACE MY WINDOWS?

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Many people say they want new windows because they fear lead paint, want better soundproofing, energy efficiency and easy cleaning. Then the answer is to restore original windows, not replace them. Restoration will cost less and the windows will be lead free, soundproof, energy efficient and easily cleaned. I have trained many small contractors and homeowners how to perform this task efficiently, cost effectively and for those who insist they want tilt-ins for easier cleaning this system can give them an easy cleaning solution as well. All of this and a new combination wood storm/screen cost less than a wood tilt-in with vinyl jamb liners and no storm. This system keeps the sash weights, cuts nothing off the window sash and removes all old paint and glazing. My friend John Seekircher, a steel casement window restoration expert, always says, "The reason they call them replacement windows is that you have to replace them over and over again,"

EPA & HUD lead paint regulations are out of control! The facts however fly in the face of this anti-preservation intrusion into our lives. Lead poisoning in children has been depicted by HUD and the EPA as an epidemic. This is total nonsense. Children today have less lead poisoning than ever before in history and it has nothing to do with lead paint regulations. Taking lead out of gasoline and better factory emissions are responsible for this. In essence we should be teaching the uneducated, educated, poor and well-off families how to effectively dust their houses. Lead dust is the main culprit in lead poisoning. Common sense education is all that's needed with lead paint. Lead paint is only a hazard if it's unstable. Removing lead paint from window jambs and sashes is a safe, quick and easy process if the homeowner or contractor knows how to do it. We must start immediately training small contractors & homeowners how to do this. Right now the contractors that are getting lead certified are gouging homeowners pocketbooks because they can.

The reason homeowner's think they need to replace their windows is that the window industry spends tens of millions of dollars a year to convince homeowners to buy their inferior products. It will take a consumer about 30 years to get any payback from replacement windows with insulated glass and considering the following statements in the window industries trade magazine, *Glass Magazine*, the industry makes the case for restoration.

*July 2001 Glass Magazine, By Editor, Charles Cumpstom, "The consumer's perception of glass is significantly different from the industry's. While some in the industry think a 15-year life is adequate, it is the rare homeowner who envisions replacing all his windows in 15 years."*

Another article in 1995 in *Glass Magazine* by Ted Hart states, "Remember our industry, with rare exception, has chosen to hide the fact that insulating glass does have a life expectancy. It is a crime that with full knowledge and total capability to build a superior unit, most of the industry chooses to manufacture an inferior single-seal unit." **NOTE:** Single seal units are still the norm with an average seal life of 2 to 6 years.

As a side note to this, I am not a general contractor. I believe it is a conflict to teach people how to do these things out of one side of my mouth and then try to get their business out of the other side of my mouth. I do, however, buy endangered, historic properties and rehab them both in my job as a Community Preservation Specialist with Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and as a private citizen. This keeps me in the fray with the least conflict of interest possible. As a practical preservation advocate, there can be only one client----the consumer, their homes and neighborhoods they live in.

# RESTORE & MAINTAIN WINDOWS

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## DON'T REPLACE THEM

- Replacement wood windows are made with new growth lumber that's not as strong or rot resistant as the old growth lumber used in windows made before the 1950s.
- Insulated glass-seals tend to fail in 2 to 6 years allowing condensation between the panes.
- Most insulated glass panels cannot be replaced once they fail. The entire window must be replaced.
- Primary window sashes were never intended to take a direct hit from the weather. In early years they had shutters then storms to protect them.
- Air infiltration is the biggest energy issue with windows. Vinyl windows, by their nature, have weep holes in their bottom rail to let the moisture seep out which allows massive air infiltration.
- PVC or vinyl is the most toxic substance manufactured today. It can't be recycled; off-gasses toxic fumes and has excessive contraction and expansion issues. It fades, cracks and has a maximum lifespan of 16 to 18 years.
- Metal clad windows are designed to allow water to seep behind the cladding. This causes early rot of the often finger jointed, new growth lumber underneath.
- The vinyl jamb liners that are needed for tilt-in windows have cheap spring balances and cheesy foam backing that have a lifespan of about 6 to 10 years.
- Double hung windows were invented in the 1400s as an air conditioning system. Lower the top sash and raise the lower sash. This lets the hot air and humidity out the top and brings the breezes in through the bottom. Most replacement units don't have a full screen to allow for this process.
- Aluminum, self-storing storm windows are not even a good windbreak. Metal conducts heat and cold while wood insulated against heat and cold.
- Sash weight pockets are only a problem if a house has not been caulked and painted properly.
- ¼", laminated glass has better UV protection than all the low-e coatings. It also approaches similar thermal capabilities as insulated glass, is more soundproof, is safer and cost less than insulated glass. If retrofitting energy efficient glass into an old sash is something you feel must be done, install laminated glass.
- Original window sashes are a part of the footprint of your old house or building. Replacements often have different dimensions and sometimes the window contractor wants to reduce the size of your openings. This has a negative effect on the overall texture and look of the original footprint of your building.
- If you don't want to lift a finger to maintain or renovate your home then hire a contractor to restore your windows. Your restored windows will cost less, have a better payback, be easily cleaned, have a nice track system, and stop air infiltration which means great energy efficiency.
- Restored wood windows have another 100-year economic life before total restoration is needed again. Replacement windows can never be restored effectively.
- All materials and labor used in window restoration is generally local which means all of the money stays in the community. This is not the case with replacement windows.