



Dickson Development Corporation
A Tradition of Innovative Quality Construction

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Building Success 101

Q: What qualifies a window as "insulating?"

A: An "insulating" window is simply a window with two panes of glass separated in the frame by about a half-inch of air space. The air space acts as the insulator, retarding thermal transfer through the window. The insulation value can be enhanced by special coatings on one or both panes of glass and thicker air, such as argon or krypton, sealed into the airspace.

High-Performance Windows, Doors, and Skylights

Energy efficiency plays a central role in building any new home.

Windows, doors, and skylights have a critical impact on a home's ability to conserve energy, reduce moisture intrusion and keep utility costs low. Like the vent pipes in a roof, they are penetrations in the home's structural envelope, only much larger and more widely distributed.

The average new house has more than 20 windows and doors, each a potential avenue for outside air and water. In the past, windows and doors were not much better than open holes in the wall. They were designed to bring useable daylight into the home, provide views to the outside and allow passive (or non-mechanical) ventilation in. To keep their homes reasonably comfortable in cold seasons, our ancestors kept windows and doors to a minimum.

Fortunately, today's windows and doors are designed to *enhance* a home's energy performance. Though still relied upon for passive ventilation and maximizing views, windows and glass doors are now insulated in both their frame and glass design. High tech window construction and specially treated glass can reduce glare, minimize unwanted solar heat gain and prevent damaging ultraviolet radiation. Windows and skylights can also be designed to *increase* passive (free!) solar heating, reducing the amount of costly energy needed by the furnace.

Energy-conscious home owners can now choose among a variety of options in order to match windows and doors to their seasonal climate conditions. In addition, we can help our clients select specific windows and doors that work best depending on which side of the house they will be installed. This optimizes the home's overall thermal performance. For example, south and west-facing windows can let in more solar energy than north and east-facing windows.

In addition to enhanced glazing options, new wood-based window and door frame materials are engineered to resist warping. This minimizes any small gaps between the window and the wall that may develop over time. In better quality vinyl window and glass door frames, the hollow cavities are increasingly insulated to boost their effectiveness.

In addition to selecting the best products to meet our clients' needs and budget, we partner with knowledgeable suppliers and trained subcontractors. These industry experts help insure a high quality installation that meet our strict building standards.

Windows, doors and skylights play an important role in any home's appearance and overall performance. In a high-performance home, they are critical elements in a range of integrated design and construction strategies that help reduce a home's energy use and operating costs while increasing indoor comfort and air quality.

Obviously in our work, building new homes and constructing additions to existing homes, we incorporate energy efficient doors and windows. If you live in a home with old doors and windows that are not energy efficient consider installing new ones to conserve energy and make your home more comfortable.

Warm regards,

Richard

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