Center for Earth Leadership

eco tips

Energy Efficient Windows

Why we care

Space heating requires more energy than anything else in our homes, and about one-third of that energy is usually lost through windows and doors. By choosing energy efficient windows, we reduce heat loss, increase comfort, and cut the use of fuels that contribute to climate change.

Simple, positive steps

- Use shades or drapes and close them at night to reduce heat loss. Compare options at EfficientWindowCoverings.org.
- Install exterior or interior storm windows.
    - Storm windows are not quite as effective as replacements but are more affordable. You might start by installing them in areas where you spend the most time.
    - Indow Windows produces acrylic inserts edged with silicone.
    - Window kits, while not the most attractive, are the cheapest option. Kits consist of a box of clear plastic and double-sided tape.
- Install new windows.
    - Choose Energy Star products that meet or exceed code. Compare choices based on the U-factor and select windows with an air leakage of .30 cfm/sq ft or less.
    - Costs may be partially recouped through an Energy Trust rebate and federal energy tax credit.
- To further reduce heat loss, choose a low-E glass coating and, in the case of new windows, Argon or Krypton gas between the panes.
- Consider type of frame
    - Look for frames that maximize insulation value, such as wood, composite wood, or fiberglass.
    - Vinyl frames pose hazards to human and environmental health in their manufacture and incineration.
- Visit Energy.gov for more information about energy efficient windows.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.