

Replacement Window Vs. New Construction Installation

When deciding to replace your old windows with new windows, you have many choices to make including window style, material selection, finishing options and method of installation. As the owner of Accent Windows & Doors LLC, with over 25 years in the business, I have personally installed thousands of windows. In this article I will describe the different methods of installation and explain the pros and cons associated with each method.

Replacement Window

A replacement window, otherwise known as an insert or retrofit window is custom sized window, with its own frame, installed into your existing window frame. All of your existing trim or casings, both interior and exterior, remain in place including the sill and master frame. Just your old window sash, tracks and hardware are removed. This method of installation can be used for any type of window however there is typically more work involved when replacing windows other than double hung.

Pros - Lower price, minimal additional work since interior and exterior trim is left in place (vinyl replacement windows can be done without any additional work), more options since windows are custom sized

Cons- loss of glass area since you are installing a frame within a frame (typically 1-1 ½ inches), unable to insulate and seal the existing frame

New Construction Window

The new construction installation method involves removing your entire existing window including interior/exterior casing, sash, sill and master frame. The new window is installed into the rough opening as if it were a new home. With this method of installation all new interior and exterior trim is installed.

Pros – maximize the glass area, able to insulate and seal new window frame into rough opening

Cons- higher price (usually double the cost of a replacement window), more work involved in finishing interior and exterior trim, sometimes limited in stock window selections unless you custom size new construction windows

In some cases, the decision between a replacement and new construction window installation can be influenced by your existing windows. Some of the newer homes have window frames that were not really designed to accept a replacement window, making a replacement installation more complicated. Older windows with wood frames may be deteriorating from rot, or the trim is damaged and needs replacing anyway. These situations could make it cost prohibitive, or not even possible to install a replacement window.

Accent Windows & Doors LLC will assess each situation to help determine what is best for you and your home.