

*"Flying High on Quality  
...low on price"*



**Energy rated** PVCu windows, doors,  
bi-fold doors and conservatories

## Falcon Windows Buyers tips

Falcon Windows has provided the double glazing buyers guide for your benefit.

### Mechanically or Fully Welded

Ask your supplier if the windows you are having a quote for are mechanically fixed or fully welded. Mechanically are generally a cheaper option though they give the impression of a wooden window, whereas a fully welded window is much stronger. If the costs that you have been quoted are similar then go for the welded option. However when you are having Woodgrain, Lightoak or Rosewood windows mechanically jointed frames are aesthetically a better option as you don't see the crisscross welds which you get with the welded frame.

### Heat Saving

When you have double glazing installed you will be saving 12 - 15% with the new Pilkington K sealed units that are now obligatory with the new Fensa regulations. However, it will take you some time before you get the money back on your double glazing. Obviously double glazing helps when you come to selling your property as most people now expect it as standard.

### Deposit Required

Most companies will ask for a 10% deposit which is quite normal. We at Falcon Windows Ltd like wise take a 10% deposit with a signed contract. We only require final payment once the job is completed to your complete satisfaction.

### How Long Until Installation?

Ask your supplier how long until your windows / doors will be before they are installed as it is a good idea to get a firm date and have it confirmed in a contract. We at Falcon Windows Limited can give firm dates, if required, but only when we have received all of the customers products and materials to do the job with.

### Style & Appearance

You need to consider when choosing your windows and doors the style and appearance especially when considering properties around you or in your surrounding area. Even though you may think a certain design would look good in your house, it may not fit in with other properties in your street (No one wants to stand out like a sore thumb!!). It's a good idea to look at similar properties in your area, get a feel for what design there are and keep to a similar style.

Whilst some salesman like to keep their quotations down via skimping on openings and extra's, you may leave yourself with simple designs and ones that can even lower the cost of your property.

## **Guarantees**

Always ask your supplier about what guarantees they offer as this is most important. Many companies offer an insurance back guarantee, but as with most things they may not seem as good as the salesman depicts. Some insurance back guarantees only come into force 90 days after a company has gone into liquidation, which to most people is not much use especially if they can't lock their front door or shut a window. Check the guarantee is for ten years as some only cover for five years. We at Falcon Windows Limited are proud to say we offer a quality insurance back guarantee with the Installations Assured.

## **Previous Installations**

Try to see previous installations done by the company you intend to go with and try, if possible, to ask their customers what they thought about them and their service. Here at Falcon Windows Limited on our TESTIMONIALS page you can view all of these. Ask to see a showroom if they have one so as to see the product in situ. Try and ask probing questions such as were they on time, were they clean, tidy and polite and had they respect for your property during the installation.

## **Employed or Sub - Contracted Fitters**

Ask about how the company you intend to have fit your windows employ their fitters, are they self employed or employed by the company as if they are normally employed they are not so much in a hurry to get the job done as would be a subcontractor. A number of companies pay their fitters on so much a window and so much a door so it is obvious they try to install as much as possible in as short time as possible so corners can be cut!

Employed staff are normally on no incentive to finish quickly thus a more thorough job is done.

## **Sound Proofing**

Double glazing does provide some sound proofing especially where one pane of glass is thicker than the other such as 6.4mm laminated one side and 4mm the other. This acts as a better sound barrier than normal sealer units and also is much more secure as burglars cannot penetrate laminated glass as it has 0.4mm perspex between the two 3mm panes of glass.

The best type of sound proofing is secondary glazing as the gap between both panels is far greater thus many households around airports have been fitted with secondary glazing to help with noise reduction. If you live on a main road with traffic noise, this can be a way of reducing further noise.

## **Planning Permission**

Planning permission is sometimes required to fit replacement windows especially if they are to be installed into a listed building or a conservation area. As well as this if you are converting a loft with a velux window or converting a flat window to a bow or bay window you will normally require planning permission from your local council.

## **3 - 4 Quotations**

It is advisable to ask for a quotation from three to four companies for your requirements as there can be a wide range in their quotations. We have been in the trade for many years and quotations in general never seem to amaze me as they vary so much between one company and another for much

the same thing. Window companies you may think are more expensive are sometimes the most competitive and vice versa. Never rush into signing a contract on the night as this is normally a ploy to get you locked in! Many salesmen are often round customers houses for hours on end trying for a sale as they are normally only on commission. If you sign up with some companies and decide to cancel you can up to seven days but after this it can be a headache to cancel and you can be sent threatening letters. We at Falcon Windows Limited will only come to you if asked and by appointment only. We find out your requirements, measure up and then send a written quotation in the post within a matter of days. If the customer is interested it is up to them to contact us with a view to proceeding with the work.

It is part of our policy not to hound or put pressure on customers that we have sent quotations out to like some companies do, most people buy off someone that they can relate to and trust so long as the price is right and they are happy with the product.

## **Locking Mechanisms**

Check on the locking mechanisms on the windows as most are of an espagnotte type which is a mushroom headed device which interlocks into a metal keep in the window frame. This is fairly secure whereas the shoot bolt espagnotte locking system is a much more effective device. We recently replaced a window for a gentleman where he had a double glazed window in his dining room. Unfortunately for him he was burgled and they crow barred the sash window away from the frame because it was of the espagnotte locking mechanism only. This clearly shows that it pays to have an up-to-date locking mechanism installed. We at Falcon Windows Limited can also offer security hinges and metal male and female interlocking sections on the hinge side of any opening window which helps when a situation like this arises.

## **Finishing off the Window**

Ask your supplier if they make good around the window with sealant or plastic trims. With respect most companies now finish off with trims inside and out but is worth checking with the company who you intend to have the work done with, as this by far looks better and does not fade in colour like silicon does over time.

## **Lubrication**

All windows and doors require lubricating to all moving parts every three months as this keeps them in tip top condition and reduces service calls. The frames will also require the occasional clean with a rag. Cotton sheeting is best for cleaning, especially when used with a special PVC-u solvent cleaner which can be bought from most supermarkets or wholesaler.

## **Internal or External Beading**

Ask your supplier if their windows are internally or externally beaded as this is a definite factor if safety is at the top of your priority list. With some externally beaded window systems you can gain entry by removing the bead with a sharp putty knife and removing the glass from the frame. With respect a lot of companies who have externally beaded frames glaze their sealed units onto a double sided security tape which does not allow the sealed unit to be taken out unless you gain entry inside. We at Falcon Windows Limited, along with many other companies install an internally beaded window which makes it near on impossible to remove any glass to gain entry. Also we have a hidden external gasket which gives a better sight line to the window. There is nothing worse than seeing a thick black gasket around a white window. Some windows come with white gaskets but I would strongly recommend not to go with these as after a few years, from inside you see green mold developing on the inside of the outer beading. The windows when new look very nice as they give the impression of a wooden window, but the salesman never tell you of the possible discoloration of these gaskets. With black gaskets there is no problem and the window looks the same after 10 years.

## Glass Extra's

When designing replacement doors or windows the addition of glass options such as 'Georgian Grill' or 'Leaded Lights' can have one of the best impacts on the overall look. Georgian Designs, which are usually made up by a white plastic profile inserted to make a design within the sealed unit and Lead Light Designs. This is lead in varying widths which are applied to the glass to make rectangular, diamond and various Tudor designs.

## Georgian Designs

Most Georgian designs are made with the use of aluminium alloy of varying widths (19 mm & 25 mm are the most common) 'pieced' together with 'crucifix' joiners to create the design.

You decide on the number of squares or rectangles you require and then divide the glass / window design accordingly. Be aware that it's usually not possible to have all the rectangles/squares equal in size. (Unless, of course, you start from scratch and resize the windows)

In practice this isn't usually a difficulty for most people - however one way to maybe decrease the effect of having varying sizes within the design is to consider having an 'equal sight line' design. With this the equal sight lines even the parts of the window which do not open have 'dummy sashes' inserted that has the effect of making the overall sizes of the different pieces of glass more alike.

Another is using aluminium extrusions within the sealed units can be used to create other designs in the windows. There are Gothic Arches or Georgian Arches. (The extrusion is bent in a curve for this.)

## Lead Light Designs

The most common lead light designs are square/rectangular & diamond shaped designs. Other alternatives such as Elizabethan & Tudor designs are available.

If you want to add a leaded design to an already existing window strips of lead can be purchased from most DIY stores and this can be applied by yourself. (Varying widths available - 6 mm and 9 mm are most common). However this does require a 'steady' hand and a great deal of patience. The process is often referred to as 'single leading' because you can only apply the lead to one face of the glass - i.e. not the side of the glass facing that is towards the inside of the sealed unit.

Whilst the above can be rather satisfactory it will never look as nice as 'double leading' - this is where the lead is applied to both sides of the outside piece of glass in a double glazed unit prior to assembly.

## Condensation in the home

Condensation is an extremely underestimated cause of damage to our homes. It is responsible for rot in rafters, joists and wooden window frames; it can cause mould and fungal growth on walls and ceilings and if not dealt with, can damage our health.

Air in the home is actually a mixture of air and invisible water vapour. The average family produces 10 to 50 litres of moisture a day from activities like cooking, bathing, washing dishes, and doing laundry. Condensation is the conversion of the water vapour into a liquid and usually happens when the vapour cools. All air contains water vapour. The quantity contained depends on the temperature of the air. This ratio is called the relative humidity. Hot air is able to carry much more moisture than cold air, so as the temperature of air rises, in broad terms, it expands and attracts a greater volume of vapour. The temperature at which the vapour begins to condense is called the dew point. Condensation occurs whenever warm, moist air comes in contact with a surface or object cold enough to chill the moisture in the air below its dew point.

Outside, if this happens near the ground to a small layer of air, dew or frost will be formed, if a larger amount of air is involved, mist or fog will arise. If this happens to air that is rising in the atmosphere and expanding clouds will form

If it happens in the home....It's called condensation

As soon as warm air, containing vapour, hits a cooler surface, it will condense. This is most obvious on windows and wall tiles, but it is happening on the walls and ceilings a lot of the time. The common assumption is that if we insulate ourselves and warm the house thoroughly, then this should not happen...But it will, the air temperature will rise until it finds a cooler surface unless we let that air out and some cooler air in, which brings us on to ventilation.

Ventilation is the answer to condensation. There are many ways we can deal with symptoms or effects of condensation, but only one way to deal with the cause. We must ensure the home is adequately ventilated.

### **Ways to combat condensation**

Wipe down Walls and other surfaces regularly

While drying clothes indoors, ventilate the room

When people come in with wet coats, hang them outside to dry

Keep the kitchen door closed when cooking, and open the windows

After a bath or shower, try to ventilate the room to the outside, not to the rest of the house - just opening a window (and closing the door) will help.

Open all windows at least once a day. Change all of the air in the house as this becomes stale air and fresh air will help to

If security permits, leave top windows in the bedrooms open, especially at night, when the outside temperature drops and the indoor temperature rises as the heating kicks in. Breathing is a major contributor to condensation!

Reduce the number of indoor house plants, as plants increase humidity levels

If condensation is excessive, try a dehumidifier to remove excess humidity from the air

### **What causes condensation on windows?**

Whenever there is excess humidity in the home, it will manifest itself on the coldest area of a wall, which is normally the window. The warmer the air, the more moisture it will retain, so when it comes in contact with the colder glass surface and the air is subsequently cooled, moisture is released in the form of condensation.

### **Do windows cause condensation?**

No, condensation on windows is not the fault of the window, unless the window seal has failed and the moisture is in between the two sheets of glass. However, by replacing drafty windows or even installing a new roof, you are reducing air flow in your home and making it tighter. Tighter homes retain more humidity.

Windows present a difficult problem and years ago there used to be only one practical means of dealing with the traditional single glazed domestic window. This usually took the form of collecting the water forming in a channel at the bottom of the window and leading it via 'weep holes' to the external face. These 'weep-holes' or condensation outlets are small holes about 1/4" in diameter drilled at an angle through the frame so that water will pass by normal gravitation to the outside.

The easy answer these days to alleviate window condensation is with B rated sealed unit double-glazing into PVC-U frames. The insulation properties of both framework and glass is improving all the time as

technology moves on, and as measures are introduced by government to improve energy efficiency in line with the Kyoto Protocol.

With double glazing, houses have become more effectively sealed, keeping any moisture produced within the house and providing better conditions for condensation to occur, therefore ventilation has become very important

It is unlikely that a home in the UK can be condensation free; however by keeping your property properly maintained, and having warm edged argon filled B rated sealed units installed you should be able to almost eliminate condensation

## Contact us

For further information regarding our services, please contact us using one of the methods listed below.

**Address:** Falcon Windows Ltd  
Unit 24  
Brook house Business Park  
Hadleigh Road Industrial Estate  
Ipswich, Suffolk  
IP2 0EF

**Tel:** 01473 288690

**Fax:** 01473 288710

**Email:** [eamon@falconwindows.net](mailto:eamon@falconwindows.net)

**www:** [www.falconwindows.net](http://www.falconwindows.net)

**Company No:** 4128665

**Reg Address:** Falcon Windows Ltd  
Unit 24  
Brook house Business Park  
Hadleigh Road Industrial Estate  
Ipswich, Suffolk  
IP2 0EF