

Dear Friend,

Each month, BOWA Home Advisor provides you with important tips on how to improve and protect your home's value. We hope the following is helpful.



Custom Addition
Great Falls, VA

Feeling a Little Green?

We've all seen the headlines about the advancements in and merits of green building. Even if you haven't warmed up to the concept of ice-based cooling or solar-powered electricity, there are certainly ways that you can ease into environment-friendly housing. Installing energy-efficient windows in your new or remodeled home is a great place to start.

Energy-efficient windows are designed to keep the heat outside of the home in the summer and inside in the winter. This may reduce heating and cooling costs, minimize energy consumption causing less of an impact on the environment and potentially limit the size of the HVAC equipment required for keeping the home comfortable.

When looking to make your home more efficient through the use of high-performance windows, the National Fenestration Rating Council's (NFRC) voluntary certification program may be helpful. Most windows and skylights now include NFRC labels, which display energy ratings reflecting the entire window's performance (not just the glass). Among other information, the NFRC label may include one or more of the following ratings: U-factor, Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) and Air Leakage (AL).

Following is additional information on these factors and other important considerations.

- The U-factor (U-value) is a measure of the window's insulation ability, and includes the thermal properties of the frame as well as the glazing. The lower the U-factor, the greater a product's resistance to heat flow and the better its insulating value. Coatings and special assembly techniques, such as using two or more layers of panes, low-conductance gas fills between the layers and thermally improved edge spacers, may help to reduce a window's U-factor (indicating improved insulation).

- The solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) measures how well a product blocks heat caused by sunlight. The SHGC is expressed as a number between 0 and 1, with a lower value indicating less solar heat exchange.
- The air leakage (AL) rating measures the flow of air through cracks in the window assembly and is expressed as the equivalent cubic feet of air passing through a square foot of the product's area (cfm/sq ft). The lower the AL, the less air infiltration.
- "Low-e" (low-emittance) coatings on glass windows, doors and sunlights help to improve a window's U-factor and SHGC. There are different types of low-e glass, and choosing the right type of coating based on your climate and your home's orientation is critical.
- Finally, when selecting windows consider the home's orientation – north, south, east and west-facing windows may all require different insulating and coating characteristics to perform optimally throughout the year.

Considering the rising costs for heating and cooling and the recent advances in window technology that may help to lower these costs, it shouldn't take long for high-performance windows to pay off. And, as if lower utility bills weren't reason enough, the new federal Energy Policy Act of 2005 may help to make the decision to proceed now even more appealing. The act allows homeowners who install qualified windows and doors in 2006 or 2007 to deduct ten percent of the purchase price (up to \$500, not including installation costs) from their income tax.

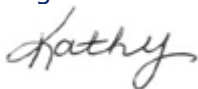
(For additional details on the Energy Policy Act of 2005, see: <http://www.efficientwindows.org/taxcredit.pdf>)

Select facts were excerpted from the U.S. Department of Energy web site.

For your convenience, past issues of the *BOWA Home Advisor*, are available in the 'About Us' section of our [web site](#).

If you would like more information on any of these topics or if there are other ways we can be of service, please contact [BOWA Builders](#).

Regards.



Kathy Kelly
BOWA Builders, Inc.
kathyk@bowa.com
phone: (703) 734-9050
www.bowa.com

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