

Questions To Consider When Buying Window Coverings

We've put together a list of questions to consider when buying window coverings for your home.

Many people are overwhelmed with the options when they start looking, and aren't sure what to ask. Because every shopper has different concerns, mark which ones are important to you, and ask these questions of the sales associate as you are going through the buying process.

We want you to feel good about your purchase, to really know what your money is buying, and to enjoy the peace of mind that comes with knowing we've got you covered with great warranty and repair policies

About the Retailer

1. Do they have a good reputation? Good customer reviews on trustworthy sites?
2. Is the staff knowledgeable and professional? Are they experts in window coverings with lots of experience or are they general store clerks?
3. Are they able to answer all of your questions and speak from experience about the products they carry and how they perform?
4. Do they come out and measure your windows for you? How much does it cost?
5. Who does the installation – specially-trained employees or low-cost sub-contractors? Are they insured and bonded? How much does installation cost?
6. Are they able to repair or service the products they sell? Can they make minor adjustments to fit if something is slightly off?
7. If you decide you want to exchange your window coverings for some reason, what are their policies? Are there fees?
8. Do they provide warranties for your products in writing? 9. How long do orders take to arrive and be installed?

About the Manufacturer

1. Does the manufacturer have a good reputation for quality products that last? Products that perform well? That are made well?
2. Do customer reviews of products stand up to sales claims?
3. Where are the products made?
4. What kinds of materials do they use? Where do they come from? If they are natural (like wood), are they sourced and harvested responsibly and sustainably? If they are man-made, are they safe for your home environment (off-gassing, child-safe materials and finishes)?
5. How does the manufacturer handle defects and products that need to be returned or exchanged? How many weeks does it take to get replacements in? Are there any charges, shipping or restocking fees you will be responsible for?

About Warranties

1. What kinds of warranties are offered? Are they shown to you in writing? How long do they last?
2. Do they transfer to the next homeowner?
3. What is covered under warranty? What is NOT covered? What voids the warranty?
4. If something goes wrong that is covered by the warranty, who does the service or repair– the retailer or the manufacturer? Can it be done in town, or do your window coverings have to be mailed to the manufacturer for service? How long does it take?

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About Shutters

1. Where are they built?
2. What materials are used? How are they harvested?
3. Are they precision-built to the measurements of YOUR windows, or are they cut down to fit?
4. For arches, round, and unusually-shaped windows: are they custom built to your window or cobbled together from parts milled for rectangular windows? Are the real wood or MDF?
Are the louvers and tilting mechanisms fully functional or are some louvers permanently glued shut?
5. Are they assembled with mortise and tenon (tongue and groove) joinery for maximum stability and strength?
6. Do they use all wood louvers (no plastic pins)?
7. Are there a good variety of louver sizes available?
8. Are there options for where the tilt rod is placed (to the side, center)?
9. Can the individual shutter panels be made to fit wide (up to 50") or very tall (up to 114") windows without having to use a divider rail to seam together multiple panels?
10. What kinds of finishes are available? Can they be custom matched exactly to your home's woodwork or paint? Are they using environmentally-safe and responsible water-based latex finishes or oil-based ones that will emit noxious fumes for months?
11. How long is the warranty good for and what does it cover? Manufacturing defects only?
Minor damages from kids, pets, and household accidents?

About Blinds and Shades

1. Where are they built?
2. What kinds of materials and options do you have for finishes, colors, and fabrics?
What about for sheerness and opacity?
3. What safety features are offered? Are the cords inaccessible or encased so that they no longer pose a hazard to children and pets?
4. Can they be motorized? Automated to open and close on a timer or when the temperature is rising?
How is that operated?
5. What kinds of lift and tilt mechanisms are available?
Do they seem sturdy enough to hold up to years of use?
6. All window coverings offer some reduction to heat entering or leaving the house through the windows.
How effective are the products you're considering? Do they have a specific R-value assigned? Are they eligible for energy efficiency rebates from the government? What options or materials make them more energy efficient?
7. Which products are suited to more challenging installations: skylights, unusually-shaped windows, arches, doors, and very large windows?
8. Can the products you're considering provide privacy while still letting diffuse light in?
How well do they block light when closed?
9. How long do custom window coverings take to be ordered and installed?
10. If they ever need repair or service, who provides that, and how long does it take?