
Your how-to guide #12

INDUSTRY JARGON

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This guide explains some key terminology that you may come across whilst making your window or door purchase.

Annealed glass

Standard float glass.

Architectural glazing

A system of glass panels that can be installed in the structure of a building, most commonly curtain walling.

Argon gas

An inert gas that is used to fill the gap between the panes of a sealed unit to help reduce heat loss.

Bay window

A window built to project outwards from an outside wall. Typically the wall below follows the line of the window.

Bow window

A window built to project outwards from an outside wall. Typically the wall below is built straight across.

Bifold door

A multi-leafed door that opens in a concertina fashion.

Bifolding doors

A multi-leafed door that opens in a concertina fashion.

BIM

Building Information Modelling. Manufacturers provide 3D models of their products so that they can be easily incorporated into the architects' designs.

BS EN 7950

A security standard for windows that is now obsolete, having been replaced with PAS24.

Casement window

A window that opens outwards with hinges either to the top or to the side.

Coatex

The Coatex finish is lightly textured and has a contemporary, metallic look. It requires little maintenance and it is more scratch resistant than traditional lacquers.

Curtain wall

A non-structural outer skin of a building that is usually glazed and is most commonly used in office blocks and other commercial buildings.

DGU

Double Glazed Unit that typically comprises the glass, the spacer bar and the tape that holds it all together.

Dormer window

A dormer is a projection in a roof that raises the ceiling height and increases the useable area of the room. The vertical face of the dormer is usually glazed with a window.

Dummy mullion

A vertical member that divides the glazed area of a window into two equal parts. It is used to give a single window the appearance of a double window and is generally used as a cost-saving measure.

Energy rating scheme

A system operated by the British Fenestration Rating Council that rates the thermal performance of windows and doors on a scale from A to G.

Espagnolette locking system

A system whereby the handle is connected to a vertical rod that runs down the open edge of the window or door. This rod typically operates multiple locking points with a single turn of the handle.

FENSA

FENSA stands for the Fenestration Self Assessment and is a scheme whereby accredited companies can issue a certificate confirming that the windows and doors comply with Building Regulations.

Finger joint

A toothed joint used in carpentry to join two pieces of wood end to end.

Floating/flying mullion

A standard mullion is a fixed vertical part of the outer frame against which two opposing windows close. When the windows are open, the mullion remains fixed in place. A floating mullion is where the mullion is attached to one of the opening windows, leaving an unobstructed opening when the windows are open.

Folding patio doors

This is another term for bifold doors.

Folding sliding door

This is another term for bifold doors.

Friction stay

This is a type of hinge most commonly used for modern casement windows. The scissor-like hinge fits to the top and bottom of the side-hung window (and to the sides of a top-hung window) and is designed to have enough friction to stop the window from blowing around in the wind.

Gasket

Pliable strips of rubber or foam that provide a seal around a window or door. Weather gaskets seal between the opening element and the outer frame, glazing gaskets seal between the glass and the frame.

GGF

The Glass and Glazing Federation.

Glazing bars

A matrix of (usually) vertical and horizontal bars that are either between the panes or planted onto the surface of the glass to give the appearance of a Georgian style window or door that is made up of several smaller panes of glass.

Glazing bead

Strips of frame material that are secured into place after the glass is inserted in order to hold the glass in place.

Hard coat

Glass that is treated with an extremely thin coating during the manufacturing process. This coating helps reflect the heat back in to the room and offers improved U-values.

Hook bolt

A hook shaped lever that is often part of a multi-point locking system on doors. When the handle is turned, the hook engages with a keep on the door frame.

Jamb

Vertical members forming the sides of a window or door frame.

K glass

One of the first types of hard coat glass developed by Pilkington.

Krypton gas

An inert gas that is a more expensive and slightly better alternative to Argon gas as a way of providing additional thermal insulation in a sealed unit.

Laminated glass

Glass that comprises two panes of glass sandwiched around a thin layer of PVB (Polyvinyl Butyral). It offers improved security and can help with noise insulation.

Lift and slide

A mechanism for sliding doors whereby a turn of the handle lifts the opening door leaf by a few millimetres. This reduces the friction and allows the doors to slide effortlessly open and closed.

Low emissivity (Low-E) glass

A sheet of glass that has been coated with a microscopic layer that reflects heat back into the room. This layer may be a hard coat or a soft coat.

Mullion

A vertical section of window or door frame that divides two window inserts or doors.

Mushroom cam

A mushroom shaped part of a locking system that slides into a slotted keep.

Panoramic windows

Very large windows (often with an aluminium frame) that offer uninterrupted views.

PAS 23

Now obsolete this was a standard to which doors were tested in the UK. The test comprised weather resistance and cycle testing. This has now been incorporated into PAS 24:2012.

PAS 24:2012

An all encompassing standard that includes testing the weather performance, cycle testing and security for windows and doors.

Patio door

A large glass sliding door that leads out into the garden or onto a balcony.

Roller cam

A cylindrical shaped part of a locking system that slides into a slotted keep.

Toughened safety glass

Glass that has been treated to make it up to five times stronger than standard glass and that when broken shatters into small relatively harmless blunt pieces rather than sharp shards.

Sash

Strictly speaking this is the opening part of any window. More commonly it refers to a more traditional vertical sliding sash window.

Sealed unit

Double or triple glazed unit that typically comprises the glass, the spacer bar and the tape that holds it all together.

Secured by Design

Established in 1989, Secured by Design (SBD) is the title for a group of national police projects focusing on the design and security for new & refurbished homes, commercial premises and car parks as well as the acknowledgement of quality security products and crime prevention projects. It supports the principles of 'designing out crime' through physical security and processes.

Self cleaning glass

This glass has a special coating on the outside of the pane that reacts with the sunshine to help break down the dirt. Then when it rains, the water is dispersed into sheets rather than droplets, and this washes the dirt away.

Shootbolt

A window lock using a shootbolt system usually consists of 3 main parts- a central gearbox and then shootbolt rods or extensions which fit into the gearbox.

Sliding folding door

This is another term for bifold doors.

Sliding patio doors

A large glass sliding door leading to a patio, garden, or balcony. These can be inline or on a corner.

Slim frame doors

Slim frame sliding doors are often designed so that the outer frame can be concealed behind the surrounding wall, making wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling glass a real possibility. Aluminium doors exist that are structurally glazed, meaning the structure of the door is in the glass and not the surrounding framework. This makes it possible for the aluminium frame to be ultra-thin.

Slim frame windows

Historically steel was the product of choice for slim framed windows. In recent years aluminium has developed to offer slim frames that mimic the sight lines of original steel windows and therefore enable a complete or partial glazing overhaul without altering the character of the property.

Soft coat

Glass that is treated with an extremely thin coating during the manufacturing process. This coating helps reflect the heat back in to the room and offers improved U-values. The soft coats generally give a better thermal performance than hard coats.

Solar gain

Solar gain (also known as solar heat gain or passive solar gain) refers to the increase in temperature in a space, object or structure that results from solar radiation.

Spacer bar

The spacer bar is the rigid bar that separates the panes of glass in the sealed unit. It used to be made from aluminium and was always silver in colour, but more recently tends to be made from a resinous compound for its better thermal performance.

Tilt/turn window

Turn the handle through 90° and the window tilts inwards on the bottom hinge; turn the handle through 180° and the window swings inwards on its side hinge.

Toughened glass

Toughened glass is made in such a way that it is less likely to break than normal float glass. It also is made in such a way that if it does break, it shatters into small relatively harmless pieces rather than long sharp shards of glass.

Transom

A horizontal crossbar in a window, over a door, or between a door and a window or fanlight above.

Trim

Trim is used to both cover gaps in windows as well as to add decorative features. It is used on the exterior of the window where it meets the walls.

U-value

U-values measure how effective a material is as an insulator. The lower the U-value, the better the material is as a heat insulator.

Weld

uPVC windows and doors are usually put together by welding the mitred corners and trimming off the excess plastic which leaves a groove at each corner.



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