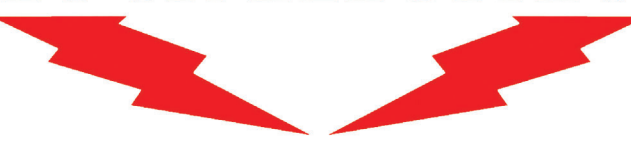


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Tips for winterizing exterior living areas

When the summer entertaining season draws to a close, homeowners need to ensure their outdoor living areas can handle weather that's right around the corner. Although outdoor furniture and other items tend to be durable, the impact snow, wind and ice can have on them may lead to damage over time. That is why many homeowners take steps to winterize their outdoor spaces and protect their belongings. Here's a look at how to prepare for the winter to come.

- **Furniture:** Cover or store furniture to protect it from the elements. Covering it with weather-proof covers can be adequate if storing items indoors is not possible.
- **Deep clean:** Items that will be covered or stored should be thoroughly cleaned prior to being removed from spaces for the season. Lingering dirt and moisture can cause damage.
- **Insulate and drain:** Don't risk damage to pipes, which can freeze and crack in the cold. Shut off the water supply to exterior faucets and drain water lines to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting. Use foam pipe insulation to prevent freezing and cover any exposed pipes.
- **Apply mulch:** After cleaning up garden debris, think about applying mulch to garden beds and cover tender plants to protect them from the weather.

- **Check gutters:** Be sure that gutters and downspouts are clear of leaves and any additional debris. If gutters and downspouts are not cleaned, ice dams may form on the roof and cause water damage.
- **Inspect and repair:** Inspect walkways and driveways for any damage and make repairs now so water will not seep in and cause further issues with freeze-thaw cycles. Consider applying a sealant to protect surfaces from snow and ice.
- **Pools and spas:** It's essential to follow the industry or manufacturer recommendations for closing down swimming pools and spas for the season. While covers may not be essential in all climates, covering can help prevent leaves and other debris from getting in the water. Water should be expelled from pipes and tubing to prevent freezing and bursting. If space allows, consider moving the pool pump indoors to prolong its longevity. Turn off the electricity to the outlet where the filter is plugged in. There may be additional, region-specific steps to winterize a property, but these pointers are a good starting point to protect outdoor spaces.



The basics of window replacement projects



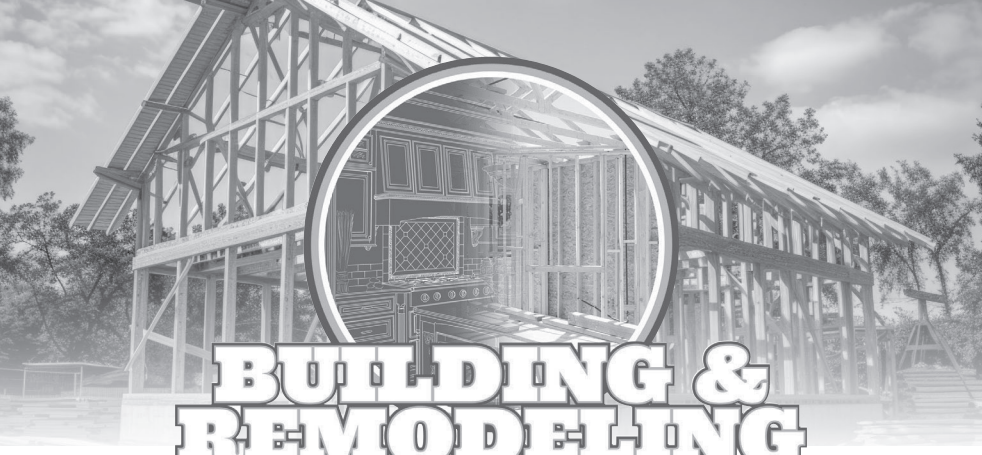
Windows in a home are easily taken for granted. Even though residents look through their windows every day, it's only when issues arise that people tend to give the windows much thought. Even if windows may not be foremost on the minds of homeowners, they are a notable component of every home. New windows also can be an expensive addition to a home, so it benefits all homeowners to gain an understanding of window replacement projects before they start shopping around for new windows.

- **Windows are more complex than new homeowners may realize.** Homeowners will need to choose between three commonly available window materials when picking new windows for their homes. Vinyl windows typically are the most affordable option, and opinions vary considerably regarding these products. Some tout their resistance to moisture, but others feel they lack the aesthetic appeal of costlier alternatives like fiberglass. Vinyl windows also can't be painted, which some homeowners may find problematic. Fiberglass windows can be painted and are known for their strength and durability. Aluminum windows are strong and durable as well, but they may not provide as much thermal protection as some other options. Each window type has its own unique pros and cons, and homeowners are urged to do their homework to determine the best fit for them.
- **Consider variables unique to your home.** Climate is an important consideration when choosing windows, and that of course is unique to each homeowner. How hot or cold the local climate can be will affect how well windows insulate a home, so a window that's best for one particular region may not be ideal for

another. Homeowners are urged to investigate which window materials are best suited to their local climates. All windows protect against the elements, but some might provide more adequate insulation, which can help keep utility bills low and everyone inside a home more comfortable.

- **Homeowners may need to decide between replacement windows or new construction windows.** The window experts at Pella note that new construction windows are the primary option for newly constructed homes or room additions. Replacement windows are typically installed when homeowners need new windows but do not want or need to remove existing exterior cladding or trim. Replacement windows tend to be considerably less expensive than new construction windows, but the latter option merits consideration before making a final decision.
- **It can be budget-friendly to replace more than one window at a time.** Some, though not all, window installation companies charge a non-negotiable project fee, so it can be more financially savvy to replace more than one window at a time. Replacing windows piecemeal may require homeowners to pay the project fee for each installation, whereas homeowners who replace multiple windows at the same time will only incur that fee once. If homeowners know many windows in their home are in need of replacement, it can be financially advantageous to replace all that need it at once rather than breaking the project up and paying multiple project fees.

Window replacement projects require careful consideration so homeowners identify the best products for their home.



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