



**WINDOW Rama**

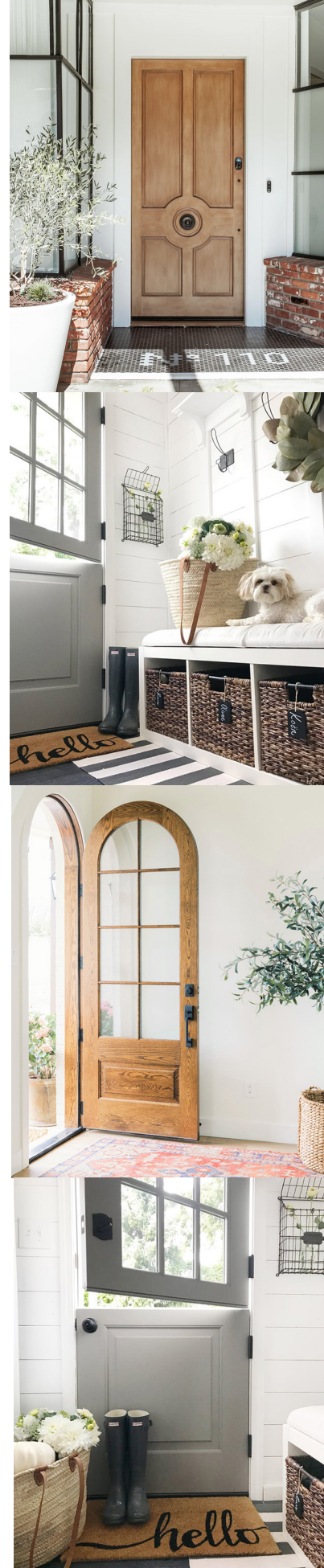
**ENTRY DOOR  
BUYING GUIDE**

# INTRODUCTION

When choosing a front door, be sure to consider the various material types. Each entry door material type may appeal to homeowners for different reasons. For example, some may prefer the elegant look that a wood door can bring while others may not want the maintenance required.

The right front door should reflect your home's architecture and your personal taste. Popular options include:

- ***Classic wood doors for traditional or craftsman-style homes.***
- ***Sleek steel or fiberglass designs for modern and contemporary looks.***
- ***Doors with decorative glass for added charm and natural light.***
- ***Double doors or oversized entry doors for a dramatic, upscale look.***



## SIGNS TO REPLACE

If you're not sure if it's time to replace your entry door, here are some tips that can help you decide.

### EXCESSIVE DRAFTS

Use a stepstool to (carefully) check if there's space at the top of your door. If there is — and especially if you can see light coming through — you have a bad seal. If you can slide a dollar bill under your door when it is closed, there's no doubt you could improve your energy efficiency.

### LACK OF NATURAL LIGHT

If you have a solid door with no glass, imagine how your home could be transformed with the addition of a door with decorative glass, and/or the addition of a sidelight or transom. An entryway with glass isn't just beautiful; it also expands your view and welcomes natural light into your home. A door with textured glass or internal blinds could also enhance your privacy while maintaining natural light.

### OUTDATED SECURITY

Your family's safety and security are your #1 priority. If you're concerned that the current state of your door won't deter a break-in, it may be time for a secure, durable upgrade.



**TIP #1** Open and close your doors — on both dry and wet, humid days. Make sure all the components operate smoothly. If your door doesn't close securely, or fits tightly on humid days, then it's most likely leaking air on dry days, causing the home to lose energy.

**TIP #2** Inspect the weather stripping around all sides of the front door to make sure it has not worn out. On a bright day, stand inside near your door and look for daylight flowing through the door perimeter. If light comes in, then external air (and possibly moisture) are as well. That means it's time to determine if your foam-filled weatherstripping may have lost its compression, become cracked, or is simply worn out.

**TIP #3** Examine your locks to make sure they operate smoothly and are strong enough to help protect your home. Multi-point locking systems, like those that can be requested on Therma-Tru® doors, offer exceptional peace-of-mind and security for the home.

**TIP #4** Reach out and touch your door on both hot and cold days. If you feel the exterior temperatures on the inside surface, your door may not have adequate insulation. In this situation, consider upgrading the door with a replacement that is more energy efficient and has an ENERGY STAR® qualified rating for your geographic area. Also, request a multi-point locking system in your replacement door order for a tighter fit against the weatherstripping that will provide even greater energy savings.

**TIP #5** Look at the appearance of your door. If you have a wood door, it may be warping or rotting after years of service. A steel door can get dinged and rust over time. It's also possible that the style of the door simply doesn't match the design of your home. These "red flags" are telling you that it's time to replace your front door.

# ANATOMY OF A DOOR

Recognizing terms like “lite,” “panel,” “transom,” or “sidelite” will help you choose a door style that fits your home’s architecture and enhances its curb appeal.



# DOOR HANDING

Knowing the correct handing of a door is important because it ensures that your door operates properly, fits your space, and provides the best combination of comfort, function, and security.



## LEFT HAND

Hinges on left,  
pushes away from you.



## RIGHT HAND

Hinges on right,  
pushes away from you.



## LEFT HAND REVERSE

Hinges on left,  
pulls toward you.



## RIGHT HAND REVERSE

Hinges on right,  
pulls toward you.

## TYPES OF MATERIALS:



## FIBERGLASS

Durable, low-maintenance, and can mimic wood grain beautifully. Great for energy efficiency and weather resistance. Fiberglass doors can last up to 30 years and do not require high maintenance. Fiberglass doors also boast great energy efficiency, saving up to 10% to 20% of heating and cooling costs.



## STEEL

Steel doors last approximately 20 years, are low maintenance, and they offer exceptional security due to their heavy construction. They are also a more affordable door option. However, steel doors may rust or dent over time.



## WOOD

Timeless and elegant but requires more upkeep and can be affected by moisture or temperature changes. Wood doors can last up to 30 years, depending on the climate. They may even increase home value by as much as 10% because of their classic look and curb appeal. Most manufacturers require an overhang for wood doors to keep them within warranty.

## PROS:

- **Versatility:** Fiberglass doors can mimic the look of wood and are available in various styles, offering versatility in design.
- **Durability:** They are highly resistant to warping, cracking, and rotting, making them durable in extreme weather conditions.
- **Low Maintenance:** Fiberglass doors require minimal maintenance and are resistant to dents and scratches.

- **Durability:** Steel doors are highly durable, offering strong resistance to harsh weather conditions and potential intruders.
- **Low Maintenance:** They are relatively low maintenance, requiring minimal upkeep compared to wood.
- **Affordability:** Steel doors are often more budget-friendly than wood or fiberglass options.

- **Aesthetic Appeal:** Wood doors are known for their natural and warm appearance, providing a classic and timeless look.
- **Customization:** They can be easily customized in terms of design, finish, and size to suit specific preferences.
- **Insulation:** Wood has natural insulating properties, helping to maintain indoor temperatures.

## CONS:

- **Cost:** Fiberglass doors can be more expensive than basic steel doors.
- **Painting Limitations:** While they can be painted, fiberglass doors may have limitations in terms of color changes.
- **Environmental Impact:** The manufacturing process of fiberglass doors may have a higher environmental impact compared to wood.

- **Aesthetics:** Some homeowners may find that steel doors lack the natural and warm aesthetic appeal of wood.
- **Susceptibility to Dents:** Steel doors can dent if struck with force, and the paint may chip over time.
- **Thermal Conductivity:** Steel is a good conductor of heat, so these doors may not provide as much insulation as wood or fiberglass.

- **Maintenance:** Wood doors require regular maintenance, including painting or staining, to protect them from the elements.
- **Cost:** Wood doors can be more expensive than steel or fiberglass options.
- **Vulnerability to Elements:** This door option is susceptible to warping, rotting, and insect damage if not properly maintained. Many manufacturers require an overhang for a wood door, or they will void their warranty.



## OVERHANG

**Understanding Exposure Types:** Many wood doors require a full overhang to protect the door to qualify for the manufacturer's warranty.

## FULLY PROTECTED DOORWAYS

Fully protected doorways have a large porch and are completely covered by the front overhang where no rain or moisture can reach the door.

## PARTIALLY PROTECTED DOORWAYS

Partially protected doorways have mid-size porches and an overhang, but only enough to protect the top half of the door. The bottom half is much more susceptible to water and moisture as the sun can break down the finishing seal over time by baking the bottom half of the doors.

## UNPROTECTED DOORWAYS

Unprotected doorways offer no protection from the weather. There is no overhang to protect the door unit from wind, snow, rain, and exposure to the sun. It's important to choose a tough door to provide maximum protection from the elements.

# TYPES OF DOORS

Below are common types of door styles. Wood doors offer the most options for customization.



**PANEL**



**1/4 GLASS**



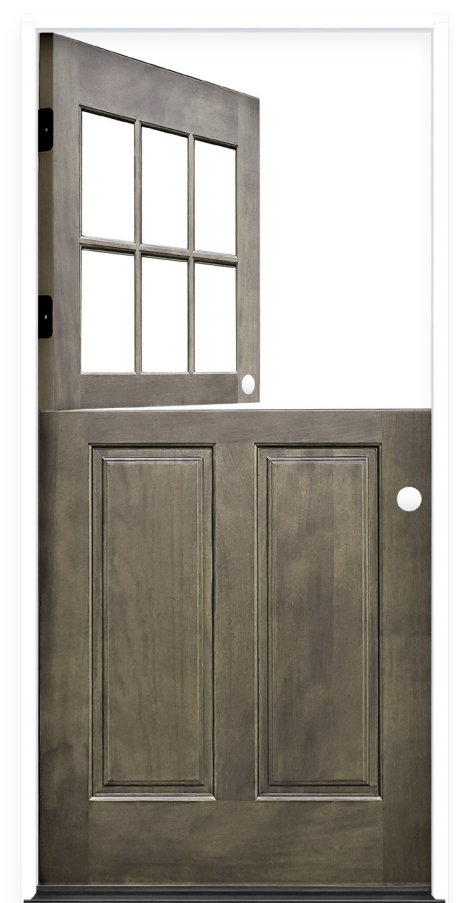
**1/2 GLASS**



**3/4 GLASS**



**FULL GLASS**



**DUTCH DOOR**

## FIRE-RATED DOORS

Residential grade fire doors are typically installed when a garage adjoins a house. Residential steel-edge doors can hold a 90-minute fire rating, while wood-edge doors can hold only a 20-minute rating.

# DECORATIVE & PRIVACY GLASS

- **Colored or stained glass** pieces and accents can create a stunning, artful look. These designs often combine various glass textures and colors for a unique entrance door.
- **Leaded glass** combines multiple glass pieces separated by metal caming — the thin strips that hold the glass pieces together. Brass, nickel and wrought iron caming are most popular and outline the pattern of the glass design and add dimension and character.
- **Privacy glass** (usually rated with a visibility from 1 to 10, with '1' being clear glass and '10' being totally obscure glass). Types of privacy glass differ by manufacturer, but can include reeded glass, satin etch glass, and rain glass, among other choices.
- **Blinds-between-the-glass** are window or door blinds that are sealed inside the glass panes instead of hanging on the outside. This design keeps them protected from dust, damage, and everyday wear — so they stay cleaner and last longer with virtually no maintenance. Because they're built right into the glass, they also free up space, provide a sleek, uncluttered look, and make it easy to control light and privacy with a simple adjustment.
- **Flush-glazed glass** is when the glass is set directly into the frame or sash of a door or window, rather than being held in place by a raised insert or molding. This creates a smooth, seamless look because the glass and the surrounding frame sit flush with each other. Not only does this provide a cleaner, more modern appearance, but it also allows for more visible glass area (which means more natural light).



# STORM DOORS

Storm doors protect and add energy efficiency to your home's entrance. There are many style options and colors to choose from to complement your design style and budget. Most are easy to install and now have 'hold-open' and 'hands-free' closing systems.



## FULLVIEW INTERCHANGEABLE

Let in the maximum amount of light and air while beautifully framing your entry door.



## FULLVIEW RETRACTABLE

Let in an abundance of light while also benefiting from convenient ventilation, at any time, without having to remove a glass panel.



## 3/4 LIGHT

Enhance your entryway with a classic look at an exceptional value with a solid lower embossed panel.



## 1/2 LIGHT

The 1/2 light panel offers traditional style with a solid lower embossed panel.



## LUMINAIRE® RETRACTABLE SCREEN DOOR

Add ventilation without changing the look of the entryway.

# ENTRY DOOR HARDWARE

All doors have some sort of latching mechanism to hold the door tight against the weather strip for a good seal, and a lock to provide security. Locks come in a variety of styles, options, and finishes, but generally fall into three categories: cylindrical, mortise, and multi-point.



## CYLINDRICAL LOCK

A cylindrical lock is installed by boring two holes in the door — one through the face for the lockset and one on the edge for the latch. The handle or knob operates a latch bolt that extends into the door frame to keep the door closed.



## MORTISE LOCK

A mortise lock is built into a deep pocket (or “mortise”) cut into the edge of the door. Inside that pocket sits a solid lock body that combines both the latch and deadbolt mechanisms in one unit.

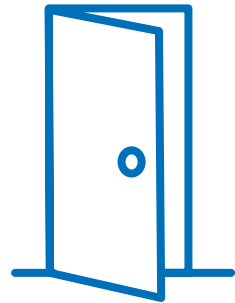


## MULTI-POINT LOCK

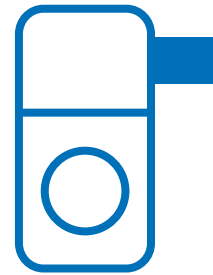
A multi-point lock secures the door at three or more points along the frame — typically at the top, middle, and bottom — using one handle or key. When you lift the handle or turn the key, multiple bolts or hooks engage simultaneously into the frame.

# SECURITY

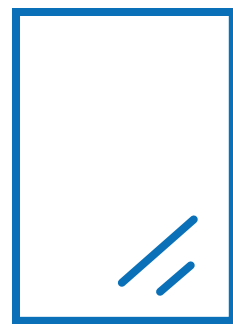
Your front door is your first line of defense. Consider:



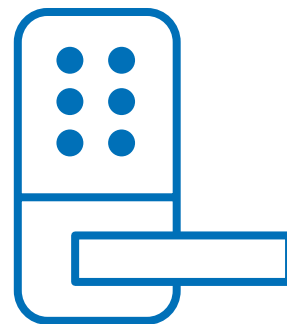
**SOLID CORE CONSTRUCTION  
(AVOID HOLLOW DOORS)**



**MULTI-POINT LOCKING SYSTEMS  
FOR ADDED PROTECTION**



**IMPACT-RESISTANT GLASS IF  
YOU INCLUDE SIDELIGHTS OR A  
GLASS INSERT**



**SMART LOCKS OR ELECTRONIC  
DEADBOLTS FOR ADDED  
CONVENIENCE AND ACCESS CONTROL**

Make sure your installer reinforces the door frame and strike plate during installation. A high-quality lock is only as good as the structure behind it.



## ENTRY DOOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

An energy-efficient door can help regulate indoor temperatures and lower your heating and cooling costs.

*Look for:*

- **ENERGY STAR®-rated doors**
- **Weatherstripping and thermal insulation**
- **Low-E glass if you include windows or glass panels**

A properly installed door with a tight seal around the frame makes a noticeable difference in comfort and energy savings.

# MAINTENANCE AND CARE

Maintaining your entry doors is essential for both security and curb appeal. Here are some tips to help you keep your entry doors in good condition:



## 1. REGULAR CLEANING

- Clean the door's surface regularly with a mild detergent and water to remove dirt, dust, and grime.
- Pay special attention to the hardware (knobs, handles, locks) as they can accumulate dirt and become less functional over time.

## 2. INSPECT FOR DAMAGE

- Regularly inspect the door for any signs of damage, such as cracks, warping, or rot.
- Check for loose or missing screws and tighten or replace them as needed.

## 3. PAINT OR FINISH MAINTENANCE

- Wooden doors should be repainted or refinished every few years to protect them from the elements.
- Sand the surface, remove old paint or finish, and apply a fresh coat of paint or finish to prevent rot and maintain aesthetics.
- Metal doors may need occasional touch-ups to prevent rust. Use an appropriate type of metal paint or primer if necessary.
- Fiberglass doors: Clean with soap and water occasionally to maintain appearance

## 4. WEATHER STRIPPING & SEALS

- Check the weather stripping around the door frame for wear and tear. Replace any damaged or deteriorated weather stripping.
- Ensure the door's bottom sweep or threshold seal is functioning correctly to prevent drafts and moisture from entering your home.

# MAINTENANCE AND CARE

## 5. LUBRICATE HARDWARE

- Apply lubricant to hinges, knobs, and locks to keep them functioning smoothly. Use a silicone-based lubricant for this purpose.
- Test the locks and deadbolts to make sure they work correctly.

## 6. INSPECT GLASS AND SCREENS

- If your door has glass panels or screens, check them for cracks or damage.
- Clean glass surfaces regularly to maintain visibility.

## 7. ADDRESS PEST CONTROL

- Seal any gaps or cracks around the door frame to prevent pests from entering your home.
- If you notice signs of termite damage or other pest infestations, take immediate action to address the issue.

## 8. ADJUSTING ALIGNMENT

- Over time, doors can become misaligned, leading to difficulty in closing and sealing properly. Adjust the hinges or strike plate as needed to ensure a snug fit when closed.

## 9. PROTECT AGAINST HARSH WEATHER

- During severe weather conditions, consider using storm doors or installing an awning to protect your entry door from rain, snow, and direct sunlight.

## 10. SECURITY UPDATES

- Ensure your door's security features are in good working order. If you have a deadbolt, make sure it extends fully into the strike plate.
- Consider upgrading to more secure locks and hardware if needed.



# WINDOW Rama<sup>®</sup>

## LET'S GET STARTED TODAY

If you noticed any of the “signs it’s time to replace” mentioned earlier and have already finished educating yourself on the available door options, then it’s probably time for you to take the next step.

## IN-HOME ESTIMATE

When you choose the installation pro’s at WindowRama, you’ll receive:

- An in-home visit from one of our qualified professionals
- Customized advice on your home improvement project
- Credible estimate of your project’s costs

## VISIT A SHOWROOM

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