

What to Know About Insulated Glass Unit Replacement

When Your Windows Start to Fog

If you have lived in North Texas for more than a few years, you have probably seen it happen. A vertical window that once looked clear and clean suddenly develops a cloudy haze between the panes. Or a sliding glass door starts showing beads of moisture inside the glass on cold mornings. That foggy glass is not just an eyesore. It signals that the sealed airspace inside your double-pane window has failed.

For homeowners and property managers around Dallas-Fort Worth, this problem shows up most often in older double glazing that has been exposed to years of temperature swings. The fix is not always a full frame replacement. In many cases, insulated glass unit replacement solves the issue for a fraction of the cost and keeps the existing frame and trim intact. That approach saves time, reduces waste, and often preserves the original look of the building.

Why Double-Pane Windows Lose Their Seal

A double-pane window works because two layers of glass are separated by a spacer and sealed around the edges. The space between them is filled with a gas fill, usually argon gas, which improves thermal efficiency far better than plain air. A desiccant inside the spacer absorbs any residual moisture during manufacturing. As long as the window sealant and the frame seal hold, the unit stays clear and energy-efficient.

Over time, though, the seal can break down. Direct sun, expanding and contracting frames, and minor building settlement all put stress on the edges of the glass unit. Once the seal fails, moisture creeps in. The desiccant gets saturated, and then condensation starts forming inside the airspace. That is the fog you see. Along with the fog comes a noticeable drop in thermal efficiency, higher heating and cooling bills, and a window that just looks bad.

Seal failure can also happen because of manufacturing defects or damage during installation. But in most residential cases, it is simply age. A well-made double-pane window might last fifteen to twenty years before the seal starts to go. After that point, glass replacement becomes the practical option.



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What Insulated Glass Unit Replacement Involves

When you call a professional for an [insulated glass unit replacement](#), the process is more precise than it sounds. A technician first measures the existing glass unit removal dimensions carefully. The thickness of the glass, the width of the spacer, and the type of low-e coating all need to match the original or meet current energy code. Then the old glass unit is removed from the frame, usually by cutting through the silicone sealant that holds it in place.

The frame stays put. That is the big advantage of this approach. Instead of tearing out the whole window assembly and disturbing the wall or siding, the crew only replaces the sealed glass portion. They clean the frame, apply fresh silicone sealant, and set the new unit into place. After the sealant cures, the window looks and performs like new.

This type of work is common for vertical windows, but it also applies to sliding glass doors and fixed picture windows. The glass itself is often tempered glass for safety, especially in doors or low-level windows. The new unit can include modern low-e coating and a fresh gas fill to bring the window up to current thermal efficiency standards.

Cost versus Full Frame Replacement

One of the first questions people ask is whether glass unit replacement is worth it compared to buying a whole new window. The answer depends on the condition of the existing frame and the age of the home. If the frame is solid, the wood or vinyl is not rotting, and the hardware still works well, then replacing only the insulated glass unit is almost always the more economical route.

Full frame replacement involves removing the entire window, patching the siding or drywall, and installing a new frame. That work can run several hundred dollars per window and often requires painting or trim work afterward. Insulated glass unit replacement, by contrast, costs roughly half as much per window and can be completed in a single visit. The savings multiply when you have multiple windows showing the same foggy glass issue.

There are situations where full replacement makes more sense. If the frame is damaged, if you want to change the window style or size, or if the old windows are so inefficient that upgrading

to a completely different system pays for itself in energy savings, then a full swap may be the right call. But for the common case of seal failure in an otherwise sound window, glass unit replacement is the smarter choice.

Recognizing When It Is Time

Foggy glass is the most obvious sign, but it is not the only one. You might also notice condensation forming on the interior side of the glass more often than it used to. Or you might feel a draft around the edges of a vertical window even when it is closed. Those symptoms point to a broken frame seal or a compromised window sealant.



Another clue is a visible film or residue inside the glass panes. That is the desiccant breaking down and releasing particles into the airspace. Once you see that, the window will never clear up on its own. No amount of cleaning on the outside will fix what is happening between the panes.

If you catch the problem early, you might save the window by having the seal repaired. But most seal failures have been going on for months before they become visible. By the time you notice fog, the desiccant is already saturated, and the gas fill has leaked out. At that point, replacement is the only reliable fix.

What to Look for in a Replacement Unit

Not all replacement glass units are the same. The quality of the spacer, the type of sealant, and the gas fill all affect how long the new unit will last. A good unit uses a warm-edge spacer that reduces heat transfer at the edge of the glass. The window sealant should be a high-grade silicone or polyisobutylene that resists UV damage and stays flexible for years. The gas fill should be argon or krypton, depending on the window size and the desired thermal performance.

Low-e coating is also worth considering. It reflects heat back into the room in winter and keeps solar heat out in summer. For homes in Texas, a low-e coating on the inner pane can noticeably reduce cooling costs during the long hot season. Just make sure the coating is compatible with the existing frame and the type of glass you are using.

Tempered glass is standard for any window within reach of the ground or near a door. It is stronger than annealed glass and shatters into small pebbles instead of sharp shards if broken. For second-story windows or fixed panes that are not accessible, annealed glass might be acceptable, but tempered glass is always the safer choice.

Finally, check the warranty. A reputable company will offer a window warranty that covers seal failure for a set number of years. That warranty is your assurance that the unit was built with quality materials and proper workmanship. If a company does not stand behind its glass unit replacement work, that is a red flag.



Getting Started with a Free Estimate

If you have windows with foggy glass or condensation between the panes, the next step is straightforward. Contact a local window service that specializes in glass replacement and schedule a free estimate. A technician will inspect the windows, measure the units, and give you a price for the replacement work. Most estimates include the cost of the new glass unit, the labor for glass unit removal and installation, and the disposal of the old unit.

During that visit, ask about the type of gas fill they use and whether they include low-e coating in their standard units. Also ask about the warranty on the seal and the glass itself. A company that answers those questions clearly and confidently is one you can trust with the job.

Insulated glass unit replacement is a practical, cost-effective solution for homes with failed double glazing. It restores the clarity, thermal efficiency, and appearance of your windows without the disruption of a full frame replacement. For homeowners across DFW, it is often the best way to handle seal failure and keep the house comfortable year-round.