Exterior Window and Door Replacement Guidelines

Exterior windows and entry doors are the responsibility of the homeowner. However, all replacements must comply with HOA and Town of Vail requirements. These guidelines are intended to assist homeowners in the selection, permitting and installation of replacement windows and doors.

1. **HOA Requirements**: The replacement of exterior doors and windows requires Architectural Review approval by the VRC Board of Directors. All requests must be submitted via the **Architectural Reviews** section on the HOA AppFolio portal and will be reviewed by the BOD at their quarterly meeting.

   If the proposal is approved, then an HOA approval letter will be provided and is required for the Town of Vail approval process.

2. **Town of Vail Requirements**: The replacement of exterior doors and windows also requires Town of Vail Planning approval and, in most cases, a building permit. *The exception is when only the door or window panel is replaced and the existing door jamb or window frame is left in place.*

   There are several building code requirements related to life-safety for window replacements, including emergency egress for bedroom windows and safety glass in certain locations, as well as energy code requirements.

   Typically, the homeowner's contractor submits the required permit applications, beginning with the **Planning Exterior Alteration** application**.** Once approved, the **Building Permit** application may be submitted. For more information visit Town of Vail Planning Department

3. **Conditions for Expedited VRC Approval:** If the proposed replacement meets conditions previously approved by the BOD, then the application may be expedited and approved by VRC management.

- ✓ **Same-for-same replacements**: Proposals that involve no change to the window or door dimensions, no alteration to the building framing and no change in style (i.e. the replacement window will still be a casement, slide-by etc.) may qualify for expedited approval. Eligibility is contingent upon proposing HOA-approved exterior colors, materials, as well as ensuring adequate door stile dimensions and selecting a vetted product line.

- ✓ **Slider door to hinge door conversions**: Many homeowners have replaced the original slider entry door with a window and standard hinged door. New proposals that conform with those that have been routinely approved in the past, may qualify for expedited approval, presuming the proposed replacement otherwise meets the accepted standards for color, material, etc. and vetted product lines.

4. **Installation Contractors**: Be selective – window and door installation requires a specialized set of skills to achieve proper fit, function, seal and weatherproofing. All contractors must comply with the **VRC Remodel & Construction Rules.**

5. **Energy Code**: In addition to building code requirements for windows that primarily focus on life-safety issues, the Energy Code also applies. The primary requirement, which describes insulating performance, is for a u-factor of 0.28 or less. To put this in perspective, this means you will lose about 6 times as much heat per square foot through your new windows as you will through your wall areas, but this is a huge improvement! Your existing windows likely lose something like 20 times the amount of heat per square foot as your walls. Note that the u-factor requirement applies to windows, slider doors and entry doors with glass.

   All the major manufacturers should be able to provide windows and doors that meet the Energy Code requirements and that are designed for high altitude, at least in their better window product lines (high altitude glass is critical). It may be difficult, however, to source windows that meet the requirements through stores such as Lowe's or Home Depot that more typically carry the lower budget product lines of windows.

Although the Energy Code doesn't establish requirements for it, the next most important measure of energy performance (after the u-factor) is the solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC). This is a measure of how much solar heat gain you will experience indoors when sun hits the glass. Note that there are SHGC requirements if you plan to seek energy tax credits. In our area, the desired SHGC performance depends on your situation. For windows that see a lot of direct sun and cause the room to overheat, particularly in the summer, you might prefer a low SHGC (<0.25). On the other hand, if you want to heat the room via sunlight coming through the windows, a higher SHGC is preferred (>0.35). For windows that rarely see direct sun, the SHGC doesn't really matter. Nevertheless, SHGC and u-factor tend to go hand in hand; glass with the lowest (best) u-factor usually comes with a low value for the SHGC (but u-factor is by far the most important measure of energy efficiency).

6. **Window & Slider Door Exteriors:** Fiberglass composite window frames or windows with aluminum cladding are preferred for durability and aesthetics. The approved colors are listed below for several of the major window manufacturers, and all correspond to a **dark bronze finish**. Vinyl clad windows should be avoided in the VRC alpine climate.

7. **Window Interiors**: Wood interior finishes are attractive and popular, but they require careful maintenance and all exposed wood must be sealed perfectly. Condensation that forms on the interior surface of the window occurs in cold climates and, if any moisture encounters unsealed wood, overtime mold may develop.

   All exposed wood should be coated with a high-quality sealer such as polyurethane (a minimum of 3 coats properly applied). Note that most wood stains do not provide a waterproof seal.

   Fiberglass composite windows are a good option to consider. Both the window frame and sash, exterior and interior, are constructed of fiberglass composite (no wood). The fiberglass comes pre-finished with a durable powder coating (interior and exterior), so you avoid the extra costs of sealing and finishing the interior compared to windows with wooden frames.

8. **Entry Door Exteriors**: Metal (steel or aluminum) or fiberglass cladding are preferred for durability and aesthetics and vinyl products are discouraged. The approved colors are listed below for several of the major window manufacturers, and all correspond to a **dark bronze finish.**

9. **Entry Door Stile Width**: Stile width is also very important. The stiles are the vertical side panels of the door to which entry hardware or hinges are mounted.

   Narrow stiles are not compatible with certain door hardware (such as the Ving locks used for the VRC Short Term Rental Program). A minimum stile width of **5.5"** is required which most of the major manufacturers can provide.

10. **Creativity**: There are a wide variety of high-quality door products available that can enhance property values while adding a level of distinction. The Board is open to considering proposals of this nature, provided they align with and do not compromise established architectural themes.

Vetted Product Lines & Colors

- **Pella -** Mike Triebel (local sales rep)
  mtriebel@pellacolorado.com

  - ✓ Pella "Impervia" windows (fiberglass composite windows & sliding glass doors)
  - ✓ Pella "Proline" doors & windows (aluminum clad, wood interior, windows & doors)
  - ✓ Pella "Architect Series" doors & windows (aluminum clad, wood interior, windows & doors)
  - ✓ Pella "Designer Series" doors & windows (aluminum clad, wood interior, windows & doors)
  - ✓ Approved cladding color: Pella "Brown"

- **Sierra Pacific Windows**

  - ✓ Windows & Sliding Doors: Sierra Pacific Aspen Series
  - ✓ Hinged Doors: Sierra Pacific Aspen Series (available with a 5-5/8" wide stile)
  - ✓ Approved cladding color: Sierra Pacific "Bronze 024 Heritage Collection"

- **Andersen Windows and Doors**

  - ✓ Andersen E-Series
  - ✓ Approved cladding color: Andersen "Dark Bronze"