

SORRY...I DON'T DO WINDOWS... WAIT A SECOND, YES, I DO

Thoughts of spring, sunshine, and fabricating debris...
...fabricating what?

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IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WHEN YOU INVEST IN YOUR HOME YOU WANT EVERYTHING TO BE PERFECT.

Your windows are no exception. And yet, they might not be as perfect as you think – or as clean.

Windows have changed over the last few years, much like everything else.

With today's "high tech" windows comes another problem. It's called "fabricating debris." And most people have never heard of it and probably with good reason.

The only person who finds it is the person who cleans your windows. And even then, maybe not. Less than 50 percent of those people who professionally clean windows have been trained to spot fabricating debris.

Many trades come into contact with your windows; carpenters, painters and masonry to mention a few.

So what is it?

There are two common types of glass, annealed and tempered. Annealed glass breaks into large sharp pieces. Tempered glass breaks into much smaller pieces. Tempered glass is found predominantly in doors, near doors, sky lights and in windows that are larger than nine square feet.

Fabricating debris is what is left on glass after the glass is sized and cut and ready for tempering. Tempering is the process used to strengthen the glass. The glass is

heated to 1200 degrees in a very large oven. Because the fabricating debris left on the glass is still glass, it is very hard to see with the naked eye. And since it was heated on there, it's harder to remove than just simply washing the window.

It is most often found when scraping the window of all the other debris such as silicone, paint and stickers. Once the fabricating debris is found, a scratch is created by moving that debris. That's the crux of the problem. How do you get the microscopic debris off your window without scratching the glass?

I once cleaned a house that had 140 windows. Only two windows had this type of debris on them. And both windows were eight feet wide by eight feet tall. They were located over top of two other windows that were also eight feet tall by eight feet wide. You can see the problem with trying to replace those two pieces of glass.

Fabricating debris is rare and yet if you buy new tempered windows and they have the debris on them, it can be a very unpleasant rarity.

And no one seems to want to take responsibility for the problem. It starts with the person who finds the problem, that's usually the window cleaner. In my case, I ask my customers to sign a waiver of responsibility before I clean your glass. Then there's the builder – he had nothing to do with the problem, all he did was install the glass. So you go to the glass supplier – they don't temper the glass, they buy the glass and sell it to the builder. Now we are starting to get to the

root of the problem, the temperer is about four people away from the window cleaner. And they want to come back and blame the window cleaner for a problem that they created. So don't shoot me for ruined windows. I'm just the messenger. Fabricating debris isn't the only thing window cleaners need to be educated about. Some newer windows are also called "self cleaning." Under a microscope most window glass looks like hills and valleys. Self cleaning glass has a filler called a polymer. The polymer creates a much smoother finish. They are not self cleaning but they do require cleaning less often. They are cleaned somewhat differently than annealed or tempered glass.

In short, if you're considering buying replacement windows or building a new home talk to your contractor about which of your windows are going to be tempered and which are not. And when you are ready to have your windows cleaned, call a professional who understands fabricating debris and "self cleaning" windows. Most window cleaners who belong to an association understand the problem. Ask if your window cleaner belongs to professional association. There are three in the United States and any good window cleaner will belong to at least one. All three associations work to educate their members.

After all, hiring people who are educated in their field is important when it comes to the biggest investment you will make in your lifetime. Your home. ♦

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