

# On a clear day...

**YOU DON'T** do windows? Well, maybe you should. Especially in the springtime, with the days getting longer and the grit of late fall and winter staring back as we stare out, who would not want to let as much sunshine as possible come through?

## Here are tips to help you get started:

- **Find a buddy:** Window-washing goes faster with a two-person team: one does the inside, one does the outside, then each points out streaks and missed spots. Clean water needed? Hand the bucket inside to your partner instead of climbing down the ladder.

- **Perform pre-wash duties:** Vacuum up dust and dirt around and inside the window frames. Check for mold and mildew, spider webs and wasp nests, leaks and places that need touch-up painting. Check for broken glazing and cracks, and repair and replace, if necessary. If windows operate on weights and chains or ropes, check that they work properly.

- **Choose proper tools:** Experts seem to prefer a squeegee over other tools; they're probably correct. Be sure that the squeegee with the widest blade will fit your smallest window. You'll also need a tool with a razor blade to remove paint blobs and such from the glass.



Warm water with a little soap, changed frequently, will do the job on most windows. If you use rags, have a

good, clean supply -- you don't want to push dirt from one place to another. Keep paper towels handy to remove the little drips that collect at the bottom rail of the window sash, plus a clean sponge to sop up inside the frame.

- **Do interior surfaces first:** They're easier to get to and tend to be cleaner -- and you don't want to get the equipment dirty right away.

- **Rub-a-dub:** Use a clean rag to remove the dust, dirt and grease you can see on a window. Then start washing. Use glass cleaner on dirt that won't budge with just water. For outside surfaces, use a garden hose to spray off the worst of the grime. The operable word here is *spray*, and gently, without much pressure. Do not use a power washer.



If you use newspaper - another popular method - take a sheet and wipe the window top to

bottom on the inside, left to right on the outside, so if there are streaks, you'll know exactly where.

- **Avoid a common mistake:** Don't squeegee a window in direct sunlight; you'll leave streaks. Also, don't clean on a hot day; the water will dry on the glass too quickly and leave streaks.

• **Be organized:** This is especially important if aluminum storm windows are involved. Slide the glass and screens out of the tracks and put them to the side while the window is washed inside and out.



Then wash and dry the storm-window glass and screens and reposition them. (If the screens, likely to be dusty and even pollen-caked, aren't cleaned, the first strong breeze will blow the gunk back onto your clean windows.) Wear clean, dry latex gloves to keep the storm-window glass fingerprint-free.



• **Be efficient:** If you have a lot of windows and they aren't easy to reach, hiring a professional might be a better alternative than washing them yourself. Make a few calls, and shop for the best



price.

When you do get an estimate, it will probably be for storm windows as well. Make sure the pricing includes cleaning not only the outsides of the windows and storms, but the insides as well.