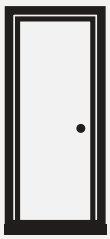
Exterior door buying guide

Your front door is the first thing people see and the hardest-working door in the house. Here is what to decide, in order.

AN ENTRY DOOR IS A SYSTEM

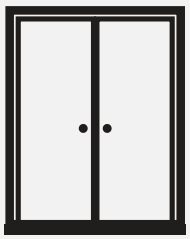
DOOR The slab you see and swing.	**FRAME** The jambs that hold the door.	**GLASS** Lites in the door, sidelites or transom.
HARDWARE Handleset, deadbolt or multipoint lock.	**SEAL** Weatherstripping and sweep that keep rain out.	**SILL** The base of the frame, with the threshold you step over.

1 · PICK YOUR CONFIGURATION



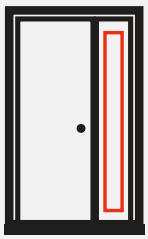
Single door

The most common entry. Fits standard openings.



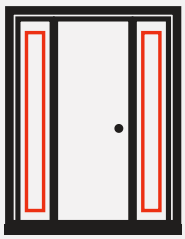
Double door

A grand, wide entry. Great for moving furniture.



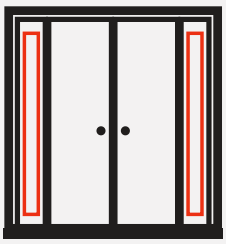
Single + one sidelite

Adds daylight where space is tight on one side.



Single + two sidelites

A balanced, bright entry for most homes.



Double + two sidelites

The biggest statement and the most light.

WANT MORE LIGHT?

Add sidelites, a transom above the door, or more glass in the door itself. Every option on this page can take a transom.

REPLACING AN EXISTING UNIT?

Keep the same configuration and the job is simpler. Changing it — adding a sidelite, say — usually means resizing the opening. Ask us first.

i **Just a back or side door?** Most are a single door, with or without glass — the material, glass and security pages still apply.

Choosing a material

Built for the Lower Mainland: long wet winters, coastal air and strong summer sun on south and west walls.

2 · WOOD, FIBREGLASS OR STEEL?

	WOOD	FIBREGLASS	STEEL
Look	Real grain, warm and rich. Can be refinished.	Convincing wood grain or smooth. Paint or stain.	Smooth or embossed. Paint finish.
Our rain	Can swell, warp or check with moisture. Needs cover.	Won't rot, swell or warp. Handles wet winters well.	Won't swell. Can rust if the finish is scratched.
Sun & salt	Finish breaks down in full sun.	Stable in sun; dark colours run hotter.	Heats up in direct sun. Salt air speeds up rust.
Upkeep	Highest — refinish every few years.	Low.	Low — touch up scratches quickly.
Strength	Solid and heavy.	Strong; resists dents.	Very strong, but can dent.
Insulation	Fair.	Very good — foam core.	Very good — foam core.
Cost	Highest.	Mid to high.	Most affordable.
Best for	Covered, protected entries where the look comes first.	Most Lower Mainland homes — the all-weather choice.	Budget-conscious, sheltered entries and back doors.

HOW EXPOSED IS YOUR DOOR?

A door under a deep overhang or porch has an easy life. One facing south or west, or open to driving rain, needs a tougher material and finish.

CLOSE TO THE WATER?

Salt air is hard on steel and on hardware finishes. Fibreglass with a marine-grade hardware finish holds up best.

✓ **Not sure?** For most homes in the Lower Mainland, fibreglass gives the best balance of looks, weather resistance and upkeep.

EXTERIOR DOORS · PART THREE

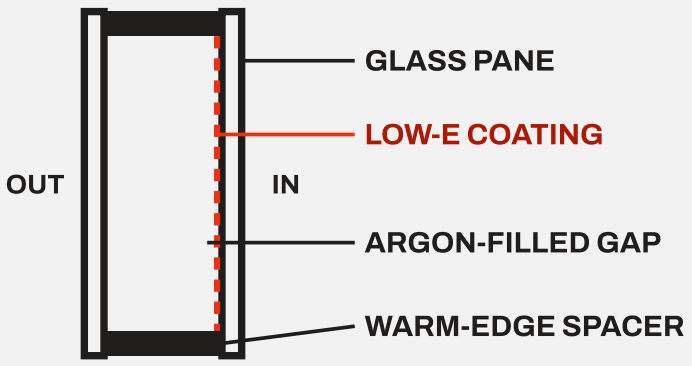
Keeping the heat in

3 · ENERGY EFFICIENCY

U-value

How fast heat escapes through the door and glass. **The lower the number, the better it insulates.**

Glass is usually the weakest part, so the more glass, the more the glass package matters. Ask for the U-value on your quote to compare options fairly.



LOW-E

An invisible coating that reflects heat back into the room in winter and out in summer.

ARGON

A clear, harmless gas between the panes that slows heat loss.

WARM EDGE

An insulating spacer that cuts cold edges and condensation.

TRIPLE PANE

A third pane for the lowest U-values and extra quiet.

NAFS COMPLIANT

NAFS — the North American Fenestration Standard — tests windows and doors for air leakage, water resistance and wind load. The BC Building Code calls on it, and our exterior units are NAFS compliant.

THE SEAL MATTERS TOO

Compression weatherstripping, an adjustable threshold and a door sweep keep drafts and rain out. A multipoint lock pulls the door tight against them.

i **Building new or renovating with permits?** Your project may need to meet specific energy targets. Tell us early and we will match the unit to the requirement.

EXTERIOR DOORS · PART FOUR

Glass, light and style

4 · GLASS CHOICES

CLEAR	DECORATIVE	PRIVACY	MINIBLIND
Maximum light and a full view. Best where privacy isn't an issue.	Patterned, bevelled or leaded (caming) glass. Adds character and some privacy.	Textured or frosted. Lets light in, blurs the view.	Blinds sealed between the panes. Tilt or raise them; they never need dusting.

FRONT DOOR	BACK OR SIDE DOOR
Glass brightens a dark hallway and shows who is at the door. Sidelites and a transom bring in light without glass in the door itself.	Can be solid for privacy and security, or glazed for light into a kitchen or mudroom. Miniblind glass is a popular middle ground.

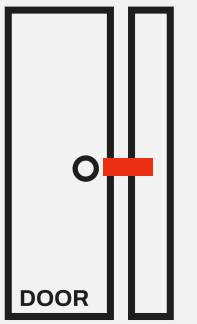
5 · MATCH THE DOOR TO YOUR HOME

HOME STYLE	DOORS THAT SUIT IT
West Coast / modern	Flush or plank doors, narrow vertical glass, wide sidelites. Black, grey or natural wood tones.
Craftsman	Square glass in the top third, often with a shelf below it. Sturdy, wood-look finishes.
Traditional	Raised panels, decorative glass, two sidelites and a transom.
Farmhouse / cottage	Plank or simple panel doors with a top lite. A good place for a bold colour.
Townhouse / condo	Single door, often with one sidelite. Privacy glass works well on busy streets.

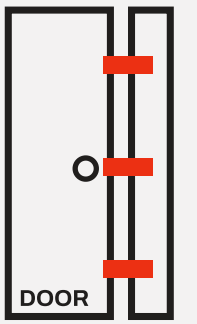
i **Bring a photo of the front of your house.** Seeing the whole elevation makes it much easier to choose a door that fits.

Locks and security

6 · SECURITY: MULTIPOINT LOCKING



SINGLE POINT



MULTIPOINT

A standard lock holds the door at one point. A **multipoint lock** secures it at the top, middle and bottom with one turn of the handle.

Much harder to force — the load is spread along the whole edge of the door.

A tighter seal — it pulls the door evenly against the weatherstripping, cutting drafts and helping tall doors stay straight.

Built into the door and frame, so it has to be chosen when the unit is ordered. It can't simply be added later.

DEADBOLT

A second, heavier bolt. Standard on most entry doors without a multipoint lock.

REINFORCED STRIKE

A heavy strike plate with long screws into the wall framing — the frame is often the weak point.

HANDLESET & FINISH

Choose the look, the finish, and whether you want keyed, keypad or smart-lock compatible.

7 · INSWING OR OUTSWING?

INSWING

Opens into the house. The most common choice for front doors; hinges stay protected inside.

OUTSWING

Opens outward. Saves interior space and seals tight against wind. Needs security hinges and good cover from the weather.

i **Hinge side and handing** follow our rule: stand where you push the door open — whichever side the hinges are on is the hand. See the A-1 Door Swing Guide.

EXTERIOR DOORS · PART SIX

Measure and get a quote

8 · WHAT TO MEASURE

1 WIDTH

The opening width, in inches.

Width _____ **in.**

2 HEIGHT

The opening height, in inches.

Height _____ **in.**

3 WALL DEPTH

Wall thickness where the jamb sits, including drywall.

Depth _____ **in.**

4 SWING

- ☐ Inswing
- ☐ Outswing
- ☐ Left ☐ Right ☐ Unsure

5 THE SILL

What does it sit on, and is there a step?

- ☐ Concrete
- ☐ Wood subfloor
- ☐ Step down outside

6 PHOTOS

- ☐ Outside ☐ Inside
- ☐ Sill ☐ Hinges
- ☐ Lock edge ☐ Whole house

YOUR ENTRY DOOR CHECKLIST

- ☐ Configuration
- ☐ Glass type and amount
- ☐ Multipoint or deadbolt
- ☐ Material
- ☐ Colour, inside and out
- ☐ Swing and handing
- ☐ Door style
- ☐ Hardware and finish
- ☐ Measurements and photos

! **Exterior doors: don't guess.** The right size depends on the existing frame, sill, wall construction and how it will be installed. Your measurements are for planning and quoting — A-1 verifies before anything is ordered. For more detail, see our How to Measure for a Door guide.

i **Don't have all the answers? Come in anyway.** Bring your photos, measurements and ideas, and the A-1 team will help you choose the right entry door for your home.