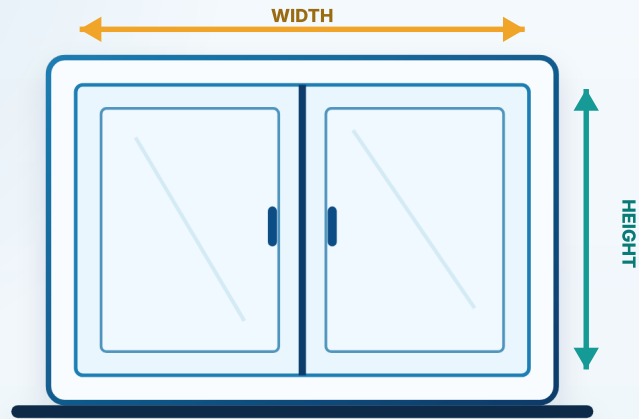


INDEPENDENT HOMEOWNER EDUCATION GUIDE



The Complete

How to Measure Windows Correctly

A step-by-step homeowner and renovator guide to recording useful window sizes, opening details, and photos - without turning a preliminary measurement into a costly custom-order mistake.

Measure consistently

Record width, height, depth, diagonals, and reference points the same way every time.

Choose the right scope

Separate insert, full-frame, rough-opening, sash, and glass-only measurements.

Protect the order

Know when a homeowner measurement is useful - and when a professional must confirm it.

Copyright, Disclaimer & Usage

COPYRIGHT

© 2026 GlassQuote.ca. All rights reserved. *How to Measure Windows Correctly* and its worksheets, tables, diagrams, and layout are the property of GlassQuote.ca and are protected by copyright. No part of this guide may be reproduced, resold, redistributed, or republished - in whole or in part, in any form - without prior written permission, except as permitted under the personal-use license below.

PERSONAL-USE LICENSE

Your purchase grants one household a personal, non-transferable license to read, print, and use this guide and its worksheets for your own window project. You may print copies for your own planning and for the contractors you are actively soliciting. You may not sell, sublicense, post publicly, or distribute the file or its contents. Contractors and businesses require a separate commercial license.

EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE & NO PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP

This guide is provided for general educational purposes only. It is not legal, engineering, architectural, home-inspection, manufacturing, installation, or professional construction advice, and reading it does not create any contractor-client, advisor-client, or professional relationship between you and GlassQuote.ca. Every home, opening, wall assembly, and product is different. For decisions that affect safety, structure, water management, code compliance, product ordering, or money, consult a qualified local professional who has inspected the specific opening.

PRELIMINARY MEASUREMENTS ARE NOT ORDER SIZES

Measurements recorded by a homeowner or renovator are intended for budgeting, quote preparation, product comparison, and discussion. They are not authorization to manufacture, cut, temper, laminate, fabricate, or order a custom product. Final manufacturing dimensions should normally be confirmed in person by the supplier, contractor, glazier, installer, or other qualified professional who accepts responsibility for the order.

VERIFY BEFORE ANYTHING IS ORDERED

A visible opening, frame size, rough opening, masonry opening, glass daylight size, and manufacturing size are different measurements. Never subtract a universal allowance or assume one dimension can be converted into another without the selected product's written instructions and a professional site check.

PRODUCTS, OPENINGS & INSTRUCTIONS CHANGE

Product lines, profiles, installation systems, required clearances, mullion rules, maximum sizes, warranties, safety-glazing requirements, and manufacturer instructions change. This guide deliberately avoids giving a universal deduction or claiming that one measurement method controls every product. Confirm current product-specific instructions directly with the manufacturer or supplier.

SAFETY & ACCESS

Do not climb, lean out, remove glazing stops, disturb broken glass, dismantle a sash, expose a rough opening, or work near overhead electrical hazards solely to obtain a measurement. Use a qualified professional whenever safe access, fall protection, glass handling, structural review, or removal is required.

INDEPENDENCE & NO ENDORSEMENT

GlassQuote.ca is independent. This guide does not endorse, rank as universally "best," or recommend any specific manufacturer, brand, product line, or contractor. Any brand, program, or organization named is referenced only for factual explanation or so you can verify information at its source.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

This guide is provided "as is," without warranties of any kind. To the fullest extent permitted by law, GlassQuote.ca is not liable for any loss, damage, cost, misfit, delay, rejected order, injury, or decision arising from the use of, or reliance on, this guide. You are responsible for your own purchasing, contracting, measurement, access, and safety decisions.

Table of Contents

Use the guide in order for a complete measurement record, or jump to the page that matches the type of work you are discussing. Page references in the digital edition are clickable.

01	Measurement Levels, Safety & Tools	2
02	Quick Start: The Measurement in 10 Steps	3
03	Know What You Are Measuring	4
04	Width & Height: Three-Point Method	5
05	Square, Level, Sill & Depth	6
06	Insert, Full-Frame & Opening-Change Scope	7
07	Glass-Only, Sash & Sealed-Unit Measurements	8
08	Combination, Bay, Bow & Specialty Windows	9
09	Access, Photos & Common Mistakes	10
10	Worked Examples & Final Review	11
11	Printable Single-Opening Worksheet	12
12	Whole-Home Inventory, Glossary & Sources	13

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Record the opening exactly as it exists. Write the reference points beside every number, attach labelled photos, and leave manufacturing deductions to the party supplying the product.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE

A measurement without a reference point is incomplete. "Width 36" is not enough. Record whether it is jamb-to-jamb, trim-to-trim, masonry-to-masonry, visible glass, sash, or rough opening.

Five Measurement Levels - Do Not Mix Them

The same opening may have several valid dimensions. The correct number depends on the purpose. Most expensive errors begin when a budgeting measurement is treated as an order size.

Level	Purpose	What you may record	Who confirms
1. Preliminary homeowner	Inventory, discussion, photos, rough budget.	Approximate width/height, style, floor, condition, access.	Homeowner
2. Quote preparation	Build a more realistic estimate and identify scope.	Three-point dimensions, depth, diagonals, trim/masonry details.	Estimator review
3. Product comparison	Compare styles and available size ranges.	Likely unit type and approximate opening constraints.	Supplier input
4. Custom order	Manufacture a specific unit or fabricated glass.	Product-defined make size, clearances, configuration, handing, glass build-up.	Qualified professional
5. Final installation	Confirm fit, support, flashing, trim, access, and sequencing.	Opening condition after any required removal or exposure.	Installer accepting risk

Safe Measurement Kit

- ✓ Rigid tape measure with clear inch or millimetre markings.
- ✓ Small level or digital level for sill, head, and jamb observations.
- ✓ Square or straightedge to identify obvious twist or obstructions.
- ✓ Notebook, pencil, labels and one opening ID per window.
- ✓ Phone camera for straight-on, detail, exterior, and access photos.
- ✓ Helper for wide openings, long tapes, or occupied rooms.

STOP AND CALL A PROFESSIONAL

Broken or loose glass; upper-floor exterior access; unstable ladders; hidden electrical hazards; heavy sash removal; missing guards; active leakage; structural movement; or any measurement that requires dismantling the opening.

ONE UNIT SYSTEM ONLY

Use inches or millimetres consistently. For preliminary work, record to the nearest 1/8 in. or approximately 3 mm. Never mix a decimal dimension with a fraction unless you also write the conversion.

The Window Measurement in 10 Steps

Use this sequence for each opening. It creates a useful quote record without pretending to replace the supplier's final measure.

1

Assign an opening ID

Room + wall + number, such as LR-N-01. Put the same ID in every photo.

2

Name the window type

Casement, awning, slider, hung, fixed, bay, bow, combination, or not sure.

3

State the intended scope

Glass-only, sash, insert replacement, full-frame, opening change, or unknown.

4

Choose the reference surfaces

Jamb-to-jamb, trim-to-trim, masonry-to-masonry, visible glass, or exposed rough opening.

5

Measure width three times

Top, middle, and bottom. Record every number and identify the shortest.

6

Measure height three times

Left, centre, and right. Name the exact sill reference point.

7

Check diagonals and level

Record both corner-to-corner diagonals and note visible bow, twist, or slope.

8

Record depth and obstacles

Jamb depth, handles, blinds, tile, trim, radiators, security bars, counters, and siding.

9

Photograph the opening

Straight-on interior, exterior, corners, sill, labels, damage, and access route.

10

Review - do not deduct

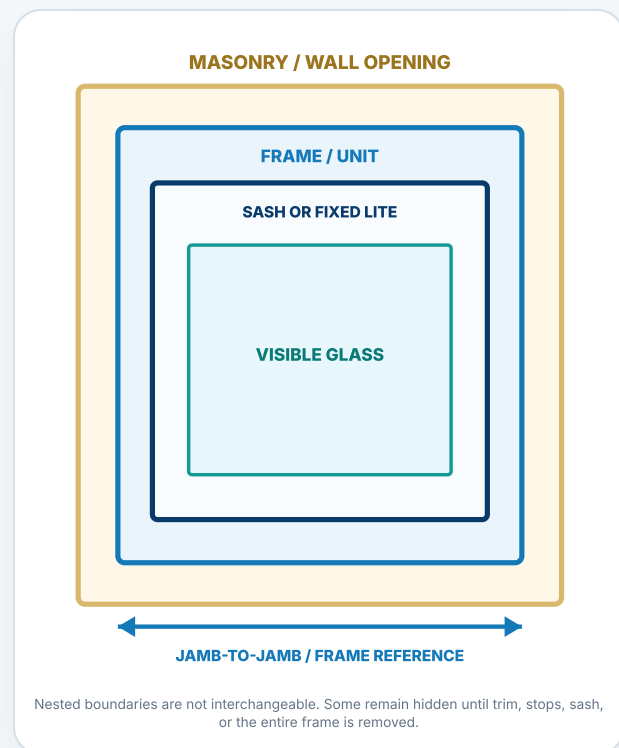
Circle the smallest measurements, but do not invent a make-size allowance. Send the complete record for professional confirmation.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The goal is not to produce one confident-looking number. The goal is to describe the opening well enough that a supplier can identify the correct measurement method, spot risk, and decide what must be verified on site.

Know What You Are Measuring

A window sits inside several nested boundaries. Write the boundary name beside the number. A clean diagram is more useful than a measurement with no reference.



- 1 **Interior trim-to-trim**
Visible casing edges. Useful for room finish planning, but usually not a product size.
- 2 **Jamb-to-jamb**
Inside faces of the existing frame. Common preliminary reference for an insert discussion.
- 3 **Existing unit size**
Outside dimension of the current frame. Often hidden by trim, cladding, sealant, or masonry returns.
- 4 **Rough opening**
The framed wall opening around the unit. Usually hidden until finishes or the existing frame are removed.
- 5 **Masonry opening**
Brick, block, stone, or concrete boundary. Record where sealant and returns begin.
- 6 **Sash size**
Outside dimension of a removable sash. Product identification may be required before replacement.
- 7 **Visible glass / daylight**
Glass you can see. It is smaller than the actual glass hidden behind stops or glazing pockets.

BUYER WARNING

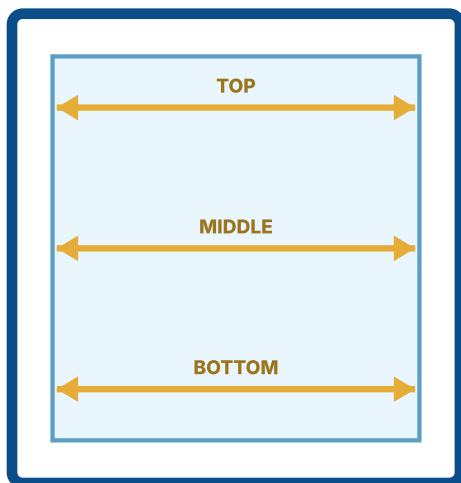
Do not describe visible glass as "glass size," or trim-to-trim as "window size." Add the reference words every time: for example, "35 7/8 in. jamb-to-jamb at the top."

Width & Height: The Three-Point Method

Openings are often narrower, shorter, bowed, or racked in one area. Measure at three locations and preserve all readings. The shortest reading is a warning - not an automatic order size.

Width

Measure horizontally between the chosen left and right reference surfaces.



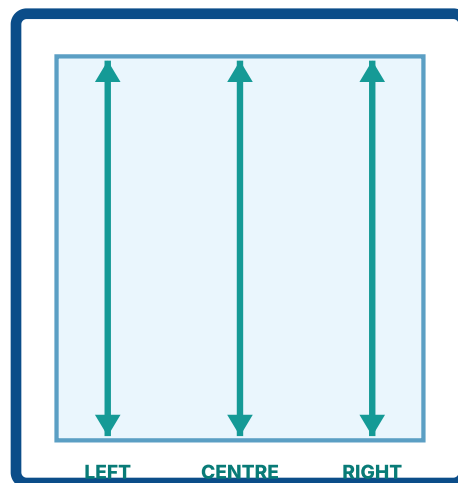
- 1 Keep the tape level and straight - not sagging or diagonal.
- 2 Hook or press the tape against the same type of surface at all three points.
- 3 Record top, middle, and bottom separately; circle the shortest.

WRITE DIMENSIONS WIDTH FIRST

Use W × H consistently: 35 7/8 in. W × 47 3/4 in. H. Put the unit beside the first line and do not rely on memory.

Height

Measure vertically between the chosen head and sill reference surfaces.



- 1 Measure from the head reference to the named sill point.
- 2 On a sloped sill, state whether you measured to the high point, low point, or stool.
- 3 Record left, centre, and right separately; circle the shortest.

MEASURE TWICE

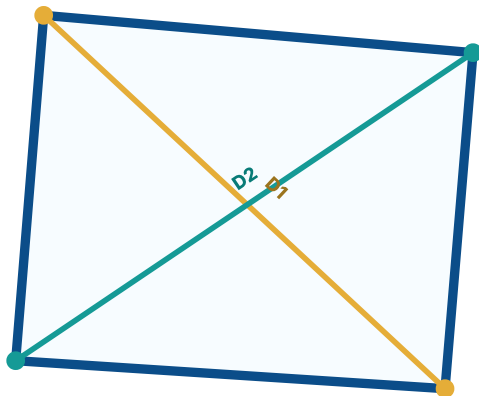
Repeat the complete set after a short pause or have a second person verify it. A repeated result is more valuable than extra decimal places.

Square, Level, Sill & Depth

Width and height tell only part of the story. A unit can fit the smallest dimension and still be difficult to install because the opening is racked, bowed, shallow, blocked, or water-damaged.

Diagonal Check

Measure corner to corner in both directions from the same physical reference surfaces.



NO UNIVERSAL TOLERANCE

Record D1, D2, and the difference. Do not decide that an opening is acceptable using a generic tolerance; product size, installation method, and manufacturer instructions control.

Sill

Note material, slope direction, damage, standing water, stool projection, and whether the measurement is to the highest or lowest point.

Depth

Record the available jamb depth at several points. Include drywall, plaster, tile, wood returns, exterior stops, and any blind or screen track.

Level & Plumb

Observe the sill, head, and both jambs. Record direction and approximate amount of visible slope or bow; do not force a level into a fragile opening.

Obstructions

Handles, cranks, locks, counters, radiators, shutters, bars, awnings, soffits, security sensors, siding, and interior trim can affect operation and finish work.

Condition

Photograph rot, soft wood, corrosion, active leakage, cracked masonry, failed sealant, loose cladding, and movement. These can change the scope from insert to full-frame.

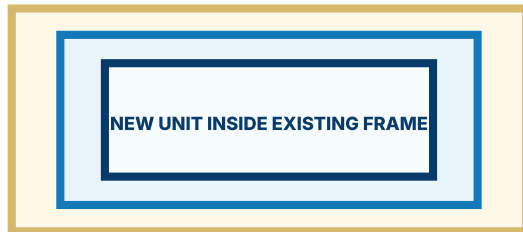
TECHNICAL NOTE

A frame can be out of square even when the visible trim looks straight. The final installer may need to expose the true opening, choose a smaller unit, correct support, or change installation method.

Insert, Full-Frame & Opening-Change Measurements

These scopes do not use the same reference surfaces. Select the scope first - or label it unknown - before anyone interprets the numbers.

Insert-Style Replacement

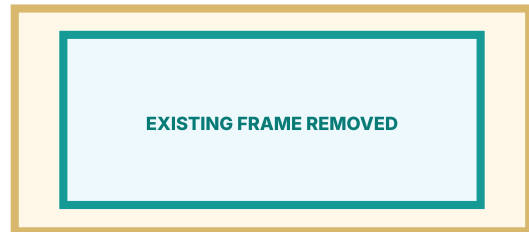


Preliminary record: jamb-to-jamb width in three places, head-to-sill height in three places, available depth, existing frame condition, sash operation, and interior/exterior stops.

DO NOT ASSUME

"Frame looks good" is not a measurement. Hidden leakage, rot, twist, or limited depth can make an insert inappropriate.

Full-Frame Replacement



Preliminary record: interior trim dimensions, exterior frame/cladding dimensions, masonry opening, wall depth, finish materials, and photos of every perimeter condition.

FINAL MEASURE OFTEN REQUIRES EXPOSURE

The true rough opening and water-management condition may remain hidden until trim or the old unit is removed.

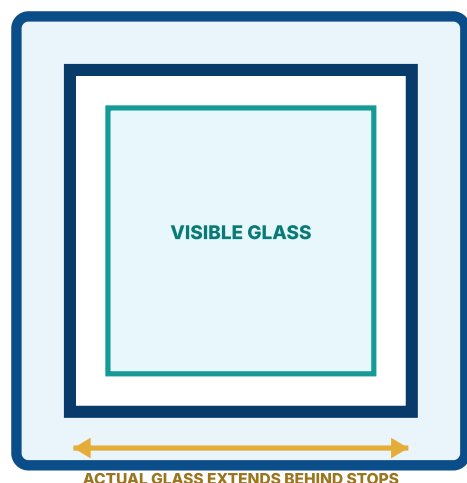
Opening Change / New Opening

Any project that widens, lowers, raises, combines, closes, or creates an opening can involve structure, lintels or headers, cladding, drainage, permits, electrical work, interior finishes, and code review. Record the existing wall and desired concept, not a final unit size.

- ☒ Overall wall area and nearby corners.
- ☒ Interior and exterior finish materials.
- ☒ Floor level and safe access.
- ☒ Nearby electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and cabinetry.
- ☒ Desired style and approximate clear opening.
- ☒ Professional structural and local-code review.

Glass-Only, Sash & Sealed-Unit Measurements

Glass replacement is not sized from visible glass alone. The actual glass extends into glazing pockets behind stops, beads, gaskets, or sealant, and the build-up must match the system.



Daylight width and height are useful clues, not fabrication dimensions.

DO NOT REMOVE STOPS

Homeowners should not pry off glazing beads, cut sealant, pull gaskets, or handle a loose sash to discover hidden glass size. Tempered or laminated glass may require permanent markings and exact fabrication.

For a Quote, Record

Visible glass width and height; overall sash or frame reference; single/double/triple glazing; approximate unit thickness if safely visible; spacer colour; Low-E/tint/frost; grids; shape; safety mark; crack/fog pattern; and photos.

For a Sash Replacement

Record manufacturer label, series, serial number, sash type, handing, hardware, overall sash width/height, profile photos, and locking points. Product identification may be more useful than a tape measure.

Measurement	Useful for	Not enough for
Visible glass / daylight	Rough quote, lite identification, photo scale.	Ordering cut glass or a sealed unit.
Overall sash	Matching a removable sash or product series.	Assuming glass pocket, thickness, or hardware.
Stop-to-stop / bead-to-bead	Additional diagnostic reference.	Universal glass deduction.
Existing label / serial	Finding product drawings and replacement parts.	Confirming current availability or exact field condition.

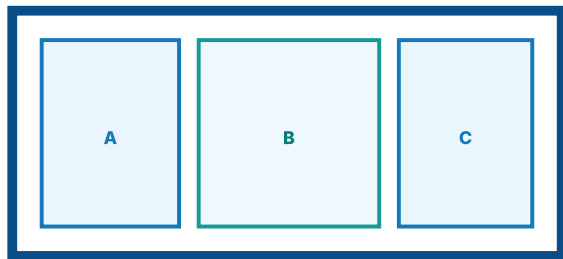
BEST PRACTICE

Send one straight-on photo, one close-up of the edge/spacer, one label photo, and one photo with the tape visible. A glazier can then say what must be measured in person.

Combination, Bay, Bow & Specialty Windows

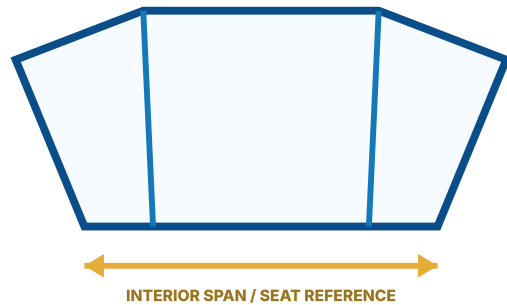
Treat each lite or operating unit as its own item, then record the overall assembly. Never average unequal sections or assume repeated panels are identical.

Combination Units



- ✓ Overall width and height.
- ✓ Each section A, B, C separately.
- ✓ Mullion widths and whether factory-joined or site-joined.
- ✓ Operating style and handing of every section.

Bay / Bow / Garden



- ✓ Interior span, exterior span, projection depth, and seat depth.
- ✓ Width of each unit and approximate joint angles.
- ✓ Roof, head, support cables/brackets, underside, and water damage.
- ✓ Professional structural and load review.

SHAPED WINDOWS

Trace or photograph arches, circles, triangles, trapezoids, and radiused corners with a square reference. Width and height alone do not define the geometry.

EGRESS WARNING

Frame size does not prove egress compliance. Clear openable width, clear openable height, opening area, operating hardware, wells, and local rules must be verified for the specific installed unit.

Special condition	Extra information to record
Basement	Well size, grade, drainage, interior finish, foundation material, and safe opening path.
Condo / high-rise	Building rules, exterior access, unit ownership boundary, glazing system, elevator/loading, and approved contractor requirements.
Historic / masonry	Brick or stone return, wood subframe, trim profile, sealant joints, lintel, and heritage requirements.
Large or heavy unit	Floor access, lifting route, crane/hoist needs, interior protection, and structural support.

Access, Photos & Common Mistakes

A complete measurement record includes what the tape cannot show: floor level, access, finish materials, damage, opening style, and the exact points used.

Minimum Photo Set

1. Straight-on interior Entire opening, trim, sill, floor, and nearby obstacles.	2. Straight-on exterior Frame, cladding, masonry, sealant, flashing, and access.	3. Close-up details Corners, damage, hardware, spacer, label, and sill condition.	4. Tape in frame Readable tape and both reference surfaces visible in the same photo.
--	--	---	---

Access Record

- ☒ Floor level, balcony, roof, well, or storefront.
- ☒ Interior path width, stairs, elevator, and door clearances.
- ☒ Exterior ladder/hoist access and ground conditions.
- ☒ Parking, loading, permits, building hours, and protection needs.
- ☒ Furniture, blinds, alarm contacts, bars, or cabinetry to remove.

PHOTO NAMING

Use the opening ID first: **LR-N-01_overall-interior.jpg**, **LR-N-01_sill-damage.jpg**, and **LR-N-01_width-top.jpg**. This prevents a correct measurement from being attached to the wrong window.

The 10 Most Common Measurement Mistakes

#	Mistake	Correction
1	Writing one width and one height.	Take three of each and preserve all readings.
2	Not naming reference surfaces.	Write jamb, trim, masonry, glass, sash, or rough opening.
3	Measuring trim instead of the opening.	Record trim separately and do not call it unit size.
4	Measuring to the wrong sill point.	Name high point, low point, stool, or frame surface.
5	Using visible glass as cut size.	Treat it as daylight only; professional deglazing may be required.
6	Applying a universal deduction.	Use product-specific written instructions and final site confirmation.
7	Ignoring square, bow, and depth.	Record diagonals, level/plumb observations, and available depth.
8	Averaging several unequal windows.	Measure and label each opening separately.
9	Forgetting handing and operation.	Photograph from inside and state hinge/slide direction.
10	Ordering from homeowner notes alone.	Require the responsible supplier/installer to confirm.

Worked Examples & Final Review

Good notes show the raw readings, reference surfaces, and uncertainty. They do not hide variation by averaging or converting the opening into a make size.

Example A - Insert Discussion

Opening ID: BR2-E-01 · Casement · second floor · scope not confirmed.

Reading	Measurement
Width top	35 7/8 in. jamb-to-jamb
Width middle	35 13/16 in. jamb-to-jamb
Width bottom	35 3/4 in. jamb-to-jamb
Height left	47 7/8 in. head to high sill
Height centre	47 13/16 in.
Height right	47 3/4 in.
Diagonals	D1 59 7/8 in.; D2 60 1/8 in.

INTERPRETATION

Useful for a preliminary quote. The installer still confirms frame condition, depth, clearance, sill, and final make size.

Example B - Foggy Glass

Opening ID: LR-S-02 · fixed centre lite · fog between panes.

Record	Observation
Visible glass	42 1/2 in. W × 55 3/8 in. H
Frame reference	48 1/4 in. W × 61 1/8 in. H
Glazing	Double-pane; dark warm-edge spacer
Appearance	Clear; no grids; possible Low-E
Safety mark	None visible in photo
Photos	Overall, spacer close-up, tape, label

INTERPRETATION

Enough to discuss range and site visit. Not enough to fabricate the sealed unit. Actual size, thickness, coatings, safety construction, and edge details require confirmation.

Final Review Before You Send the Record

- ✓ Every opening has a unique ID.
- ✓ Width and height each have three raw readings.
- ✓ Reference surfaces are written beside every dimension.
- ✓ Both diagonals, sill point, depth, and obvious bow are noted.
- ✓ Style, operation, handing, material, and condition are recorded.
- ✓ Scope is identified or clearly marked unknown.
- ✓ Interior, exterior, detail, tape, and access photos are labelled.
- ✓ No universal deduction has been applied.
- ✓ No unsafe dismantling or exterior access was attempted.
- ✓ The supplier/installer knows final order dimensions must be confirmed.

KEY TAKEAWAY

A reliable preliminary record contains more than dimensions. It shows what was measured, where, how many times, what condition exists, and what remains unknown.

Single-Opening Measurement Record

OPENING ID _____	ROOM / WALL _____	FLOOR LEVEL _____	DATE / MEASURED BY _____
WINDOW STYLE / CONFIGURATION _____		INTENDED SCOPE: GLASS / SASH / INSERT / FULL-FRAME / CHANGE / UNKNOWN _____	
WIDTH REFERENCE SURFACES _____		HEIGHT REFERENCE SURFACES AND SILL POINT _____	

Raw Measurements

Dimension	Reading 1	Reading 2	Reading 3	Shortest
Width				
Height				
Jamb / opening depth				
Diagonal D1 / D2				

SILL MATERIAL / SLOPE _____	LEVEL / PLUMB NOTES _____	FRAME MATERIAL _____	OPERATION / HANDING _____
CONDITION: ROT, LEAKAGE, CRACKS, FOG, HARDWARE, SEALANT, MOVEMENT _____ _____		OBSTRUCTIONS: BLINDS, BARS, COUNTERS, RADIATORS, TILE, SIDING, ALARMS _____ _____	
EXTERIOR / ACCESS NOTES _____ _____		GLASS / SASH NOTES: VISIBLE GLASS, LABEL, SPACER, GRIDS, COATING, SAFETY MARK _____ _____	

Required Photos

Paste / attach interior overall	Paste / attach exterior overall	Paste / attach detail / label	Paste / attach tape + references
--	--	--------------------------------------	---

MEASUREMENT STATUS

These are preliminary dimensions for budgeting and quote preparation. Final manufacturing and installation dimensions have not been confirmed.

Whole-Home Window Inventory

Use one row per opening. Attach the detailed single-opening worksheet for any window with damage, unusual geometry, uncertain scope, or conflicting measurements.

ID	Room / wall	Style	Scope	Width min.	Height min.	Floor / access	Condition / notes

Measurement Glossary

Daylight / visible glass - glass visible between stops or gaskets.

Jamb - side, head, and sill members forming the frame.

Masonry opening - opening formed by brick, block, stone, or concrete.

Sash - moving or fixed framed part that holds the glass.

Existing unit size - outside frame dimension of the installed window.

Make size - manufacturer-ordered unit dimension, product-specific.

Rough opening - framed wall opening that receives the unit.

Scope - glass, sash, insert, full-frame, or opening-change work.

FINAL WARNING

Do not order custom windows or fabricated glass solely from this guide or worksheet. The party placing the order should verify the opening, selected product, clearances, configuration, glass build-up, access, and installation method in person.

Research & Sources

- 1** **Natural Resources Canada.** Windows, doors and skylights. Guidance emphasizing product selection together with proper installation. Accessed July 2026.
- 2** **Andersen Windows.** How to Measure Windows; sizing guides and calculators. Manufacturer guidance on three-point measurements, diagonals, and product-specific sizing.
- 3** **Pella.** How to Measure for Replacement Windows; professional measurement guides. Manufacturer guidance on width, height, reference points, and product-specific deductions.
- 4** **JELD-WEN Canada.** Installation, finishing, and consumer sizing documents. Manufacturer instructions for verifying measurements and inspecting openings.
- 5** **Selected manufacturer installation instructions.** Used to confirm that rough-opening clearances, make sizes, mullion rules, and installation details vary by product.

SOURCE HIERARCHY

The selected product's current written instructions, the supplier's approved drawings, the final site conditions, and the qualified installer's accepted measurements control over any general guide.