

by James_Dulley

Dear Jim: With high utility bills and all the recent severe weather, I thought about adding rolling window shutters. Do they let any light in when they are closed and what options and features should I consider? - Julia K. Dear Julia: Rolling shutters can protect your windows and sliding glass doors from severe weather. In many hurricane-prone areas, such as Florida and the Texas coast, new homes and one's having major improvement projects are required to install approved rolling window shutters. In many other parts of the country, they are popular for energy savings and security. These rolling shutters are partially opened over sliding glass doors. Notice the small slotted holes in the flanges between the slats. All Photos by Rollac Shutters

These are the same shutters as above in the fully open position. The slats are rolled up into the boxes above the windows. Three small rolling shutters are mounted over three panes of a second-floor bay window. Notice how each can be opened different amounts. The energy savings can be significant, particularly over large windows and glass doors. Just considering the insulation value of the shutter slats themselves, installing a rolling window shutter can triple the R-value of a standard window. There are also additional savings from the dead air space which is created, reducing air leakage and blocking the sun during summer. A rolling window shutter operates in a manner similar to an old rolltop desk. It is mounted in outdoor tracks over a window or door and rolls up into a small box mounted above the window or door. The individual slats are typically about one to two inches tall and interlock with each other. The shutter is opened and closed from indoors. Rolling shutters can provide light from outdoors while the entire window is still covered. The interlocking flange between each slat has long narrow holes. When the shutter is totally closed, these holes are hidden. When you begin to lift the shutter, the slats separate to expose the holes before the bottom slat starts to lift. You have several slat design options. The least expensive is made of hollow rolled sheet metal. By rolling and forming the sheet metal, it becomes stronger. Another option is this same type of roll-formed slat with insulation in the cavity. This makes it stronger and provides more insulation. The strongest and most expensive slats are extruded metal. The type of opening device and controls you select will be determined by the type and size of rolling shutter you install and the level of convenience you desire. If a shutter is difficult and inconvenient to open and close, you will end up just not using it as often as you should for the greatest energy savings. For shutters that cover only one normal window, a pull strap is effective and least expensive. For larger shutters or heavy extruded ones, a hand crank is a good choice. This is still reasonably priced and easy to use. For the most convenience, electric operators are available. With modern electronics, groups of shutters can be operated from just one control. The following companies offer rolling window shutters: AC Shutters, (800) 745-5261, www.acshutters.com; Roll-A-Way, (800) 683-9505, www.roll-a-way.com; Rollac Shutters, (888) 276-5522, www.rollac.com; Titan Security, (800) 926-0067, www.titansecurity.com; and Wheatbelt, (800) 264-5171, www.rollupshutter.com.

Dear Jim: We are adding a 500 sq. ft. room to our house for my elderly mother to live in. I like the idea of using a heat pump, but I was told the room is too small for one. Why can't I install a small one in there? - Megan N. Dear Megan: If you were planning to install a standard split type of heat pump, you may have trouble finding one of small enough capacity. For humid climates, it may not run long enough to dehumidify the air during summer. Check with some commercial contractors that provide packaged units for motels. One of these would easily handle the heat/cooling load for a room of that size. The only drawback is a slightly higher operating sound level. Send inquiries to James Dulley, Bend Weekly, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

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