

# Weatherizing Windows

## Kevin Hsiao

I would like to make you aware of a highly effective, cheap, easy and non-controversial way to conserve energy.

Everybody in Wisconsin is familiar with weatherizing their windows during the winter using some type of clear plastic.

Well a somewhat similar window treatment can help keep the heat out. It is stunningly effective and can dramatically reduce the amount of energy used to run air conditioners.

It involves putting a sheet of what is commonly referred to as “emergency blanket” material directly on the inside surface of the glass using double sided tape. If done with a modicum of care and finesse the result looks like spandrel glass but performs much better.

The word blanket is kind of a misnomer as the material is more like thin metallic looking opaque film sold in the width and length of a small blanket. The material itself approximates the silver foil found wrapped around sticks of gum or the lining of a pack of cigarettes – but it is technically not really the same stuff.

Double-sided tape can be purchased anywhere for around one dollar. The “emergency blanket” material is sold in many sporting goods stores under many names like “space blanket”, “shock blanket”, etc. for around \$2.00 to \$3.00. The average “blanket” covers about one and one-half the glass surface of a typical sliding patio door.

In any event, the key to the application’s effectiveness is that it BE APPLIED DIRECTLY ON THE INSIDE SURFACE OF THE GLASS. It should not be used like a curtain or blind.

The cost of the material is easily recouped in the first months cooling bill. Again, I can’t emphasize it enough that it will stop your air conditioner dead in its tracks. Your home or apartment will be cool, comfortable, and shady. What is more, if your careful putting it on and taking it off, the same material can be used again and again, summer after summer. Tears can be easily repaired using regular scotch tape. With the help of a yard stick or other straight edge unsightly wrinkles, creases and gaps can be avoid and from a distance it might even look like a continuation of your aluminum siding.

For low-to-moderate income families or persons, like the elderly, living on fixed incomes whose mobility to a cooling station may be limited – it is an absolute must.

Admittedly, adhering an insulating sheet used in space exploration directly to the inside surface of your sliding patio door may seem odd but the result is honestly phenomenal.