It’s a simple goal in modern-day home life... keep cool in the summer and warm in the winter, while keeping energy costs low. The excellent thermal properties of vinyl windows make that goal attainable. The specially designed insulating airspaces in vinyl window frames—combined with their low conductivity—make them a formidable barrier to heat transfer. But their environmental performance in other areas also is impressive. This brochure will take a look at why vinyl windows and the environment are a clear view supported by AAMA’s Vinyl Material Council.


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A measure of the rate of non-solar heat loss or gain through a material or assembly. The lower the U-Factor, the lower the heat flow and the better its insulating value. 


Vinyl windows are so durable that the vast majority of those installed 20 years ago are still in use.

vinyl can be reprocessed and recycled repeatedly. Scrap is routinely recycled directly back into vinyl products, making it a resource-efficient operation. In fact, 99 percent of the vinyl used by processors goes into a finished product.

Vinyl contains chlorine as a byproduct of natural events like forest fires, lightning, and volcanoes, as well as manmade activities such as burning wood and backyard trash, diesel vehicle emissions and other combustion sources.

Some concern has been expressed over formation of dioxin as a result of burning vinyl. Dioxin is not produced intentionally; it can occur when anything containing chlorine burns. Vinyl contains chlorine. Dioxin is not produced intentionally; it can occur when anything containing chlorine burns.

Environmental benefits across the product life cycle

A comprehensive study of vinyl recycling completed in 1997 found that more than 1 billion pounds of material containing up to 25 percent recycled content were recovered in 1997 and recycled into useful products. An industry-funded study completed in 1999 found that more than 10 billion pounds of material were recovered in just one year and recycled into useful products.