



ENTRY DOOR BUYERS GUIDE

Styles | Cost | Hardware | Warranty | Installation



OUR PROMISE

Our 9 Step Process and way of doing business is what keeps our customers happy and provides the quality that you demand. We deal directly with home owners, condo owners, property managers, as well as contractors, architects, and home builders.

Why is Folkers different you may ask? Our nearly 50 years of serving the Gulf Coast and a combined 400 years of industry experience. When you work with us you truly are working with the best in the area.

The product manufacturers that we use are names we trust in our own home and the level of craftsmanship they produce are proven to withstand the test of time and the harsh Gulf Coast environment. We believe in investing in superior quality goods and employees.

The products we provide are designed to withstand the hurricanes and severe weather experienced in our neck of the woods. Unfortunately, hurricane season is like a birthday - nobody likes to deal with it but it comes every year.

As a small family owned company with a boutique atmosphere we really try to put you, our customer, first and to help you understand every step of the process from initial measure to final installation.

We've found that buyers who take the time to really learn and educate themselves about exterior doors are generally much happier in the end because they have made an educated purchase that they are comfortable with!

We hope you find this guide insight full and rewarding.

Thank you.



TYPES OF ENTRY DOORS

First, let’s take a quick look at the initial cost of fiberglass, wood, iron and steel entry doors to get an idea of how much to budget for each material type.

In the following pages, we will go into depth about the expected investment for each option.

**Please keep in mind that these prices will vary greatly based on style, impact resistance and brand.*

Iron \$8,000 - \$40,000

Wood \$3,000 - \$30,000

Fiberglass \$2,000 - \$16,000

Steel \$100 - \$7,000



COST COMPARISON

Let’s start asking the question “How much does a new front door cost?” Which is a lot like asking “How much does a house cost?”

As with most purchases with lots of options, “it depends.” However, there are a few things to consider when researching the cost of entry doors.

The price of the entry door and the cost for professional installation of the entry door is typically the two most important factors.

The maintenance requirements for the different types of entry door available will have a future impact on the overall cost of a door.

The warranty for the door as well as the warranty for the installation of the door are also items to consider.

For us on the Gulf Coast, impact rated doors are also an important item to consider. Impact rated doors are hurricane resistant and are designed to withstand certain wind speeds and storm related pressure.



FIBERGLASS ENTRY DOORS

Things to Consider

Fiberglass entry doors vary widely in cost from a couple of hundred dollars for a single six panel door with a wood frame from Lowe's or Home Depot to \$16,000 for a fiberglass entry system with sidelites and transom with custom decorative, impact rated glass. The large variety of options is what makes it so challenging when budgeting for a new entry door.

Will a standard size door work?

Typically not for a few reasons. On the Gulf Coast, our homes are subjected to a variety of harsh conditions, including heat, moisture, humidity, storms and more. This can lead to what once was a square and plum opening not being square and plum at the time a replacement door is installed. Standard size varies between manufacturers so just because a standard size in one brand works, doesn't necessarily mean a standard size will work in another brand.

What kind of glass are you looking for?

Hurricane resistant impact rated glass, Energy efficient Low E clear glass with grids, decorative glass, blinds between the glass? Glass is one of the biggest costs associated with new entry doors, especially with decorative glass and impact rated glass.

What level of door do you plan to select?

Most major door manufacturers have different levels of fiberglass doors. You also will need to consider if your door will have one or two sidelites. Is it a French door? Does it have a glass transom on the top of the door unit? Are you interested in wood grain or a smooth door? Do you need impact glass?





Level 1

IN STOCK - “OFF THE SHELF”

The most cost effective level of doors that manufacturers produce are for stores like Lowe’s and Home Depot. These doors are available off the shelf and are preset sizes (no custom size or designs).

The doors come with a primed (still needs topcoat of paint after you buy the door) or painted or stained finish in a few select colors.

Generally, these doors use the manufacturers door slabs but do not use the same components (sills, frames, hinges, sweeps, weather-stripping, etc.) that their higher quality doors have.

These doors are single entry doors with or without glass. These doors generally range from \$200-\$800.

Also, the model of door that is carried by the big box hardware stores is not the same models as carried by Folkers. We all love Home Depot and Lowe’s but their door products are of a much lower quality thus the lower price.

*These are doors that can be bought
and taken home same day.*

*Available at Big Box Stores
(Lowe’s & Home Depot) & Lumberyards*



Level II

BUILDER GRADE

The next level of fiberglass doors are generally referred to as “Builder Grade” doors. These are the doors most commonly used in new construction homes and likely what is in your home today if you have a fiberglass door. These fiberglass doors are available in either a smooth finish (for painting) or a wood-grain finish (for painting or staining.)

These doors generally have similar components to the highest level of doors but with several significant differences.

Because fiberglass doors are fiberglass molds filled with an “energy efficient foam” material, they need structural support around the edges of the door called rails and stiles. These wood structures are what give the door it’s stability.

“Builder Grade” doors and “Off the Shelf ” doors generally have narrower rails and stiles than the “Premium” line, which can lead to warping because of less structural support of the door itself. This lack of structural support in the “Builder Grade” doors means that this level of door cannot be impact rated for hurricanes and this level of door is less secure against to intruders.

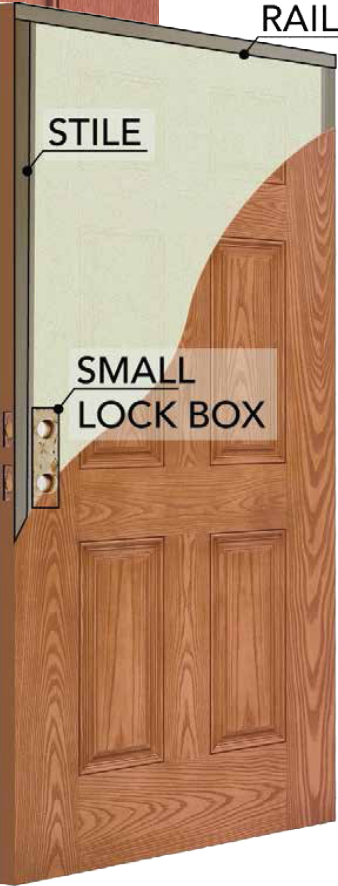
The actual fiberglass molds are also thinner in these level doors in comparison to the higher quality, “Premium” fiberglass doors.



These are just a few of the ways in which a manufacturer can reduce the cost of the door. The profiles in the molds are not as realistic, which cause many people to say that “fiberglass doors look like plastic or fake wood.”

“Builder Grade” doors are custom ordered rather than available “off the shelf.” Standard sizes are available in these doors which will save you money if they fit your opening.

These doors are available in all entry system designs from single doors to French entry doors with transom and sidelites. These doors range from \$250-\$10,000 depending on selections, size, glass, painted/stained or primed, etc.



Level III

PREMIUM

The highest level of fiberglass doors have been so perfected over time that it is almost impossible to tell if a door is fiberglass or wood. The fiberglass molds for these doors were developed from actual wood grains such as fir, oak, cherry, mahogany and knotty alder so the end product when stained, looks realistic and authentic.

The premium doors have thicker molds and thicker rails and stiles which provides increased structure and stability. These doors can be impact rated as well.

Rather than wood blocks placed at the hinge location and lockset location, these doors have full stiles on both sides of the door which not only adds to the structure and stability it adds security as well.



ADDITIONAL DIFFERENCES

Stainless steel hinges vs. plain bearing hinges - prevents rust and corrosion

Custom sizing - door will be custom built to fit your exact measurements

Longer warranty

Longer life of the door - rust and rot resistant



These doors have low maintenance frames such as composite rather than a pine frame which is susceptible to wood rot.

Like the other levels of fiberglass entry doors, these vary in price depending on what glass, selections and options you choose.

A single premium level fiberglass door starts around \$3,000 and cost up to \$16,000 for a custom sized door with sidelites, a transom, composite frame, full decorative glass, etc. Even the different decorative glass styles vary in price depending on the level of coming detail and intricacy of the glass.

Technology

Technology has transformed the way you buy a new Front Door. With technology, we are able to sit with you in your home and let you design the door of your dreams.

You will know exactly what it is going to cost you while you are building your door.

Budget Tip

Decorative glass is the most expensive part of the door. The level of coming detail & intricacy will greatly affect the price of the door

TOP
Budget conscious option - less intricacy & detail

BOTTOM
Splurge option - high level of intricacy & detail



IRON ENTRY DOORS

Buying Tip

Iron doors are a great option for someone who is looking for a high end or classic look.

These doors have an iron exterior and are rated to be hurricane impact resistant. You are even able to select a variety of colors. The doors have a variety of hardware options and with proper care, will last years. The design in the glass can even be customized to fit your dreams.

Prices

With the various designs, sizes, glass patterns and other options, an iron door price can start at \$8000 and climb significantly from there. These are great options if you are looking for “that look” that sets your home apart from the neighbors.



WOOD ENTRY DOORS

Wood entry doors are considered the most traditional of all entry doors because they have been around for as long as we have been building homes. For us living on the Gulf Coast, a wood door may not be the best option because wood is susceptible to rot and pests.

A wood door requires care and maintenance that many of us do not care to perform, even though a wood door is still one of the most popular options in the entry door market. A wood entry door can range anywhere from \$3,000 to \$30,000 depending on your selections, wood species, glass options and size of the door.

Wood is an all natural material and as a result reacts as all natural materials do. In climates with extreme temperatures and climates such as Alabama and Florida, the door will expand in the summer due to the heat and humidity and contract in the winter due to the cold. This can lead to warping and permanent damage to the wood.

SOUTHERN CLIMATE EXAMPLES

Summer

Door difficult to lock because the door has expanded and isn't lining up correctly with the dead-bolt lock.

Winter

Door closes easily but allows the cold air in because the wood has contracted.



Energy Efficiency

The energy efficiency associated with an all wood entry door is less than stellar.

Solid wood entry doors have about an R value of a 2 (less efficient) vs. a fiberglass entry door filled with energy efficient foam with an R value of 6-10 (more energy efficient). These values depend on the manufacturer and glass package selected but are significantly less than what may be required to meet building code requirements in Alabama and Florida.

Wood entry doors are available in both standard and custom sizes which will affect costs as well. Although wood entry doors have some considerations to take into account before deciding upon them for your home, you truly can do anything with a wood entry door.

Buying Tip

If energy efficiency is most important to you, then consider a fiberglass entry door.

STEEL ENTRY DOORS

Security

Steel doors are the most common door type used for new construction projects.

Steel has always been a popular option for buyers concerned about the security because of the strength of steel.

The door are available in all “big box stores”, such as Lowe’s and Home Depot, as an off the shelf product. These doors can be as cost effective as \$90.00 on sale for a traditional 4 or 6 panel steel door.

A steel door can cost upwards of \$7,000 for a steel door with sidelites and transom and decorative glass.

Consider this

Inexpensive steel doors are going to have a really thin 24 gauge steel skin. This thin steel will dent easily and once damaged begin to rust if not maintained.

At some point in the future, a steel door will rust in our area.

Also consider the doors appearance and durability when checking the thickness of the door.



Longevity

Not all steel doors have the thin steel skins though.

Some steel entry doors have an option for a 20 gauge steel in both a smooth appearance as well as a wood grain option that can be stained.

The 20 gauge steel has 49% more steel than the 24 gauge steel entry door. This heavier gauge steel door provides increased structure, durability, and security.

The longevity for this heavier duty door is increased as well. It will be more likely to resist dents and in turn rust due to damage to the steel skin.

Consider this

As with all entry door materials, the selections, glass and options you choose will affect the overall price of your door.

Wood-grain steel can also be stained to a color that works with your interior.



WARRANTY COMPARISONS

Entry Door Warranties Based on Material

Warranties vary widely across the market and between brands. The region where you live will also affect your warranty, such as a coastal region. The material you select will also determine the length of your warranty.

WOOD - A wood entry door generally has the shortest warranty because it is a natural material that adapts to the climate and weather. Most wood doors carry a 1 to 2 year warranty.

FIBERGLASS - Fiberglass entry doors that are custom made generally carry limited lifetime warranties on the product with 7-10 year finish warranties if they are factory finished (painted or stained). Before purchasing a fiberglass door off the shelf from a big box store, make sure you ask a qualified sales associate what the warranty entails and how long it lasts.

IRON - Iron entry doors generally have a 10 year warranty on the door and 5 years on the finish.

STEEL - Steel entry door warranties vary widely as well depending on the quality of the steel as well as the manufacturer. Definitely research the warranty information prior to making your decision.

WATCH OUT

If your current entry door has been leaking or you have noticed sagging in your sill, there is significant possibility that your installer will have to replace some structure and sub-floor before he/she installs your door.



INSTALLATION

Experience & Qualifications

There are handymen & contractors who install doors so the range of installation prices varies widely.

Obviously having a handyman install your door is more cost effective, where as having a specialized door installer certified from the manufacturer for installation of their products, will come at a higher price tag.

If your current entry door has been leaking or you have noticed sagging in your sill, there is significant possibility that your installer will have to replace some structure and sub-floor before he/she installs your door.

If you are purchasing an inexpensive off the shelf door, it only makes sense to go with a more cost effective installer. On the other hand, you are investing \$7,500 in your new front entry, you will probably want to pay a little more for a certified installer.

Think of it this way, you can have a shade tree mechanic install you're new transmission in your car or have a certified mechanic do the job.

In the end, the decision on whom to have install your door is something only you can decide.

INSTALLATION MUST HAVES

Get Your Warranty in Writing

The warranties for labor vary greatly as well. If you hire an individual to install your door, you will probably have a very different warranty (most likely a verbal warranty) vs. if you hire a company with a documented warranty.

Be aware of the “tail light warranty”...the warranty is only good as long as you can see the installer’s tail lights. Most companies offer labor warranties from 2 - 4 years.

The size of the door will have a big impact on the cost of installation. Obviously, the bigger the door, the more individuals it takes to install it, so it will cost more for labor.

Water Management

A critical component to any door installation would be the installation around the sill area. We install all products according to the manufacturer’s specification and to local building code requirements.

Regardless of who installs your door, ensure they are using the specifications and engineering provided by the manufacturer. If not, your warranty could be jeopardized.

Plumb, Level, & Square

You can buy the most expensive door available, but if it is installed poorly it will not function correctly. You just wasted your investment.

For a door to operate smoothly, the prepped opening must be plumb, level, and square. Many times in a replacement situation, the current opening is not plumb, level or square so the installer will have to add building material or shims to ensure the opening is ready for the new door.



ENTRY DOOR HARDWARE

Selecting Your “Door Jewelry”

Entry door hardware is one of the most overlooked aspects when purchasing a new front door.

Not only does it provide security and the functioning of your door, but it can make the biggest impact visually as well.

Entry door hardware is available in many different styles from contemporary to Victorian.

This allows you to really personalize your new door depending on your preferences and style of your home.

TOP
Historical era hardware
more curves & ornate detail

BOTTOM
contemporary hardware
square lines & minimalistic detail



Choosing a Metal and Finish

Door hardware is available in several different metals as well as different finishes for the metals.

As with doors, different levels of the metals are available from “pot metal” (Pot metal—also known as monkey metal, white metal, or die-cast zinc—is a colloquial term that refers to alloys of low-melting point metals that manufacturers use to make fast, inexpensive castings.) sidelites at “big box stores” in brands such as Kwikset or Schlage to Solid Brass sets from Emtek or Rocky Mountain. Just like the doors, these different levels of hardware come with different price tags.

You can pick up a knob and deadbolt set as Lowe’s for as little as \$25. A solid brass hardware set will run you anywhere from \$250 and up, where as a bronze set starts at \$350. Brass hardware is available in many different finishes but satin nickel, oil rubbed bronze and bright or antique brass are some of the more common options.

Folkers does not carry or sell hardware but we can install your old hardware on your new door or install new hardware you purchase.

BUYING TIP
Make sure you match your
lockset finish to your hinge finish.

HINGE FINISH OPTIONS



Remember you live on the Gulf Coast

Entry doors have hinges, of course. Those hinges are often times exposed to the elements depending on the swing of the door. Stainless steel hinges are a great option for doors in our area since stainless steel does not rust. Stainless steel hinges are silver in color so they may not match your handle set so consider this option carefully.

Another popular option for entry door hardware is the Electronic Deadbolt hardware. This is a great option if you do not like carrying a key around with you.

Folkers does not install or carry these locks but any locksmith can retrofit an electronic lock on your new door.



FOLKERS SHOWROOM

Your front door can either enhance or detract from your home's appearance. It's the first thing people notice about your home.

The cost of a new door can vary widely as you can see. Hopefully this guide has provided you with a wide range of options to consider.

For additional questions, please visit our website or come to our showroom in Pensacola.



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