

Clear Glass vs. Low Iron Glass: What's the Difference?

Wait. There's more than one type of clear glass?? Yes! And we're here to 'clear' up any confusion. If you're like most people we meet with, you will experience one of three reactions after reading this article.

- Sure, there's a slight difference but not enough to justify the cost
- I wish you hadn't told me about this! I never noticed the green before!
- Of course I want clear. Green is not clear.

Before we start with the differences, it's important to acknowledge 2 key similarities:

- Both types of glass are safety tempered. **One is not more durable than the other**
- Both types are well-suited as frameless glass. **One is not 'better' than the other**

Regular/Standard Clear Glass

By far the most common type of glass, clear glass can be found nearly everywhere you look. Car windows, house windows, glass shelves, coffee tables, dining tables, China cabinets are all primarily made with clear glass. You can even test this with glass found in your home or office right now; look at the glass shelves in your shower niche, medicine cabinet, or the glass on your coffee table or desk. See the green on the edge? That's a result of the iron oxide present in the clear glass formula; the light hits the iron and our eyes perceive it as green. This 'green' is more apparent on the edge and becomes more pronounced with thicker and larger pieces of glass. As you look through the glass, the green is more easily noticed when next to a white or lighter colored surface; which brings us to shower doors.

Many new shower remodels incorporate white subway tiles, white marbled porcelain, marble, and quartz- all lighter colors that make it easier to notice the 'green' of the standard clear shower glass. Again, this is not a 'bad' thing. Since frameless shower doors are built to last, it's important for you to know as much as possible before making such a long-lasting decision.

Low Iron Glass/Starphire/Optiwhite

Growing in popularity in recent years, low iron glass is a premium alternative to clear glass. The formula for this type of material has much lower iron content, and therefore no apparent 'green tint'. The little iron that is present causes a kind of aqua blue hue on the edge of the glass. When looking through this type of glass, lighter toned surfaces such as white tile will maintain that bright white aesthetic. The process to reduce the iron, and the material used to make this type of glass substantially increase the material cost of your shower door compared to standard clear glass; the difference can be as much as 30-45% more.

Which One is Best for Your Shower?

Now that you've decided that privacy glass isn't needed for your shower and clear glass is the way to go, which clear option should you go with? The answer all comes down to a matter of opinion; and as the investor in your shower, the only opinion that really matters is yours. To help you with this we've collected images of a variety of showers, some where the homeowner chose standard clear and others that went with low iron glass.

Now, you might be the type of person that needs to see the 2 options in person. We have both types of glass on display at our location in Laguna Niguel. Call us today to make an appointment.

If you would like to see the differences in your bathroom, call us today to schedule a visit from one of our Measure Technicians; they will bring samples of both the regular and low iron glass so you can be better equipped to make the best decision for your shower door.

Summary

You have 2 excellent options to choose from to complete the look of your bathroom with a new frameless shower door: the most commonly used clear glass or the premium low iron glass. Standard clear is included in the base price for most quotes you will receive, and low iron glass will mean a substantial increase in cost. Both are high-quality, safety tempered, and extremely durable.

The decision you make will come down to your shower tile, your eye, and your budget. Get started on making your decision by finding out how much each option will cost for your new shower door. Call us today for a free quote.