

## Best Practices for Boarding in Property Preservation

Properly boarding windows is commonly necessary for securing vacant properties, safeguarding against break-ins and vandalism, and caring for a property that's been damaged by a natural disaster. Traditionally, plywood has been used for securing vacant properties, but some municipalities now require "clearboarding," which uses a clear polycarbonate board over openings. Be aware of local requirements and provide justification for plywood or polycarbonate when bidding a project.

Here's what you need to understand as a property preservation professional about how to board up windows, including critical guidelines, materials and techniques. As a reminder, be sure to **comply with local regulations** and always **refer to work order instructions** to be aware of specific investor or client requirements.

### How to board up a vacant property:

- **Assess the number** of windows and doors that need to be boarded. Many clients require that even small windows and entrances (like pet doors) be boarded. Appropriately covering doors and windows prevents a home from being exposed to the elements, animals, insects, squatters and potential vandalism.
- **Remove any broken glass** from windows and doors before boarding.
- **Use strong plywood** or polycarbonate to cover the entire frame of the windows and doors (see material specifications on Page 2).
- **Secure the boards** with carriage bolts for maximum stability.
- **Fully secure any windows** that don't require boarding to prevent unauthorized access.
- **Follow local regulations**—if municipal codes differ from HUD guidelines, always comply with local requirements.





## Materials Specifications for Boarding Windows:

- 1/2" plywood (or polycarbonate) for windows
- 3/4" or 5/8" plywood (or polycarbonate) for doorways
- 2" x 4" studs
- 3/8" or 1/2" x 12" long round-headed carriage bolts
- 3/8" or 1/2" nuts for the carriage bolts
- 3/8" or 1/2" washers

Do not use screws or oriented strand board (OSB).

Essential tools include a tape measure, saw, drill and drill bits, a straight edge, square, carpenter pencil, safety glasses and work gloves.

This video guide from The Home Depot provides additional helpful information if you are new to boarding windows >> [How to Board up a Window](#)

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