

# Fenestration FOCUS

Your industry  
insight

## Leading With Safety, Now and Always

By Larry Johnson, VP of Sales

“Safety first” is a common refrain in the manufacturing industry, as well as the building and construction space. It’s an important idea—and today, as the world grapples with the COVID-19 crisis and its implications for all parts of our businesses, “safety first” is more critical than ever before.

It’s worth reconsidering: What do we really mean when we say, “safety first?” What does it look like in practice? And how do we ensure that we’re maintaining a culture that prioritizes safety, all while dealing with the economic ramifications of an unprecedented global pandemic?

This isn’t about specific precautionary measures you should be taking—the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have provided guidelines outlining what



workplaces should be doing in that regard. Instead, I wanted to share some thoughts about how your organization can center all its actions around employee health and safety.

Constant communication is key. Communication is an important part of safety under regular circumstances. But dealing with COVID-19 means new and different challenges are cropping up every day. State and local guidance may be changing regularly, and your organization must be on top of every recommendation and how you can remain in compliance and prioritize employee safety.

When in doubt, overcommunicate with your teams about the measures you’re taking and the policies you’re implementing. Speaking from a personal perspective, every single internal meeting at Quanex begins with safety. Whether we’re talking sales, forecasting, customer concerns, product production, supply chain management, or anything else, the meeting begins with how we’re prioritizing employee safety in relation to that subject.

This is just one way to go about it. But no matter how you’re communicating with your teams, make sure everyone is on the same page and knows the plan.

Encourage common sense. We all have a sense of what safe behavior looks like—and what it doesn’t look like. An organizational culture that truly puts safety first empowers its employees to speak up when unsafe behavior is occurring and holds everyone accountable.

Much of the fenestration industry involves people doing physical work, which means new COVID-19-related safety measures have been implemented on our plant floors and job sites. These measures aren’t there to prevent an immediate physical safety threat, like a slip or a fall, but they’re just



as important, and we should be treating them that way. That means every employee should feel like they’re able to stop unsafe behavior if they see it happening. Promote this kind of good common-sense decision-making, and it will soon become second nature to everyone.

It starts at the top. Safety is a shared priority, and it should be top of mind for everyone at every level of the organization, especially today. Coming into a physical work environment right now carries an inherent risk that it never before has. Business leaders must take that risk into account by prioritizing the safety of workers and their families by communicating and enforcing those new protocols. Leading with safety, in everything your organization is doing, is more important than ever.

**Question or comments?** Contact me directly at [Larry.Johnson@Quanex.com](mailto:Larry.Johnson@Quanex.com).

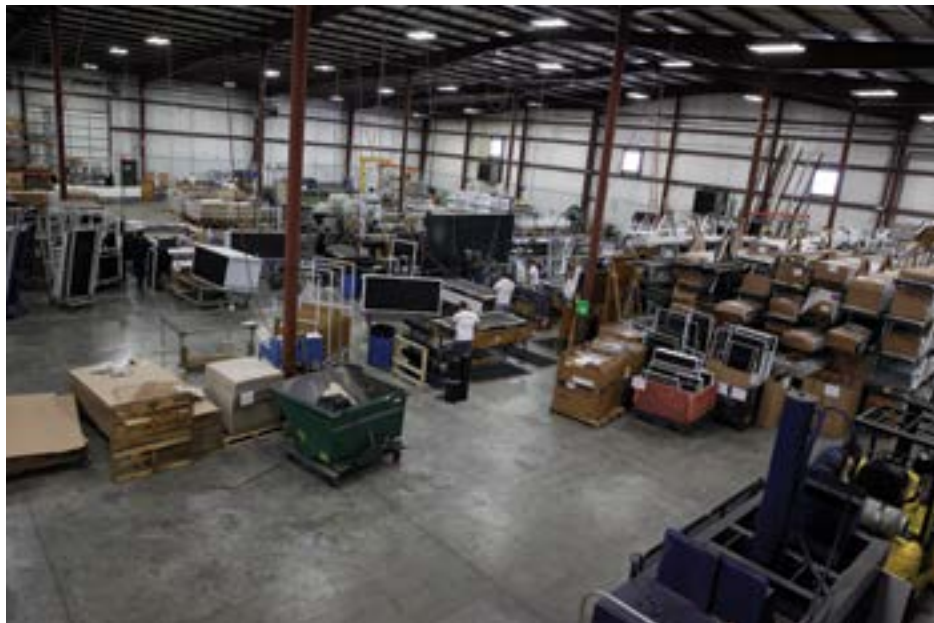
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Most pictures in this issue of Fenestration Focus were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing. Quanex employees are now required to wear face masks and practice social distancing at all times.

**Quanex**  
building products

## 7 Reasons Screens Production Causes Headaches (and one way to fix it)



Every manufacturing company has that one troublesome process. For window manufacturers, the problem process that likely comes to mind is screens production.

### Why is screens production such a headache? There are a few different reasons:

- 1. Intensive inventory.** Manufacturers must purchase and warehouse frame material, screen material, corner keys, latches, pins, springs, plungers, clips and more.
- 2. Troublesome equipment.** Screens production requires frame saws, screening tables, notching equipment, punches and assembly tables to complete each part of the process, not to mention carts for storage and packing material. Like all equipment, it requires maintenance, which takes valuable time and resources away from higher-value tasks.
- 3. Space requirements.** In most window production facilities, raw material storage and screens production equipment can occupy up to 20% of usable space—even more in some cases. And that space is at a premium. Imagine what else you could do with it, including adding new automated equipment that will help you produce more of your core products, faster and with higher quality and fewer touchpoints.

**4. Skilled technicians.** This is a big one. The efficiency and quality of factory screening processes are dependent upon the skill and efficiency of the person doing it. In the grand scheme of the business, screens are a low-value process that requires the highest degree of skill. Add in the labor shortage and this is a recipe for quality and efficiency issues, among others.

**5. Order (and payment) delays.** For most companies, the window screen is the last part added to complete the window. If a screen is incomplete or damaged, it can hold the entire order up and delay shipping. Also, the resources allocated to solving these issues could be used for something else more productive (see #4).



**6. Warranty claims.** The bane of window producers is paying out warranty claims, and oftentimes screens can be an annoying culprit. Issues with screens usually occur at install if a screen is ripped, bent or doesn't fit properly. There are also seasonal upticks, particularly in spring or fall when homeowners want to open their windows. Regardless of when it happens, a faulty or misfit screen often results in a rush situation to satisfy the end user and that can mean disrupting normal production flows and orders to settle the claim.

**7. Customer complaints.** Related to #6 is the threat of the online complaint when the screen issue is noticed or if a claim isn't settled in a satisfactory time frame. Not only is this a black eye to the window company, it can also be a drain on human capital to deal with the issue, from taking the call to scheduling production to ensuring fulfillment and ultimate satisfaction.

### One solution:

The answer? Get rid of the headache by eliminating the source. Quanex offers screens outsourcing solutions with multiple dedicated screens production facilities operating throughout the U.S. Since screens production is all we do at these locations, quality is assured, along with custom packaging and delivery options to meet the needs of any manufacturer.

**Interested in learning more?**  
**Check out [www.Quanex.com/Screens](http://www.Quanex.com/Screens).**



## How Windows Play a Role in Indoor Air Quality

According to the EPA, Americans spend an average of 90% of their time indoors, where some pollutants are often two to five times higher than typical outdoor concentrations. As many are spending more of their time at home these days, indoor air quality and its impact on our health have become a hot topic.

For fenestration professionals, it's important that we all understand the impact quality windows can have on the air we breathe and how to guide consumers to make the right choices for their homes.

### The effects of indoor pollutants.

Poor indoor air quality is linked to several illnesses and symptoms, including headaches, fatigue and eye irritation. It can also have a negative impact on respiratory health, especially for those with preexisting conditions, such as asthma. The very young and older adults are also more prone to respiratory complications associated with air quality.

Poor ventilation and fluctuating temperatures and humidity levels are common factors that impact our indoor air. When it comes to protecting homes, families, businesses and employees, finding the right indoor humidity levels can be problematic.

A review by Yale scientists reports that "seasonal moderation of relative humidity—the difference between outside humidity and temperatures and indoor humidity—could be an ally in slowing rates of viral transmission."

In the winter, the air is dry and relative humidity can drop to about 20%, making it easier for viruses to spread through the air. During these months, many use humidifiers to increase moisture and soothe familiar problems, such as sinus issues, breathing issues and dry skin.

When humidity rises, either because of season changes or humidifiers, a new set of problems can occur. First, viruses will fall to surfaces with the weight of the moisture and can live there for extended periods, making it more essential to clean surfaces regularly. Second, as it relates to windows, moisture and differences in temperatures between indoor and outdoor environments can cause condensation to build up on the glass—leading to stained frames, peeling paint and, most importantly, mold growth.



Studies cited by the CDC found sufficient evidence linking indoor exposure to mold to upper respiratory issues, such as coughing and wheezing, even in healthy people, and the development of asthma in some children.

### Solving the humidity problem.

The bottom line is that humidity can be both helpful and harmful when it comes to indoor air quality, the spread of viruses and overall health. The CDC recommends keeping relative humidity in homes and buildings between 30% and 50% year-round. Proper ventilation, air conditioning and air purification systems can also help. They also recommend repairing leaks and any areas where moisture can stand as a means of preventing mold growth.

As it relates to our industry, we can help guide our customers toward windows that offer less heat transfer and condensation buildup. Windows with Super Spacer® can help reduce mold-causing moisture around the window edge, contributing to better air quality overall. This is something we've talked about for years, and we have Health Smart Windows® marketing tools to help you convey that message.

Indoor air quality is just one of the pieces of the puzzle when it comes to keeping our families and co-workers safe during the pandemic. But it is one we can help control—and one we can help our customers understand.

**Contact our marketing department at [Qmarketing@Quanex.com](mailto:Qmarketing@Quanex.com) for more information on Health Smart Windows®.**



## Quanex Supports Hometown Communities

During the pandemic, our 40 locations have been supporting their hometown communities and first responders over the past couple of months—and we are proud of each and every contribution.

Here's a spotlight on a few locations that have made a big impact:

**Rice Lake employees band together to provide relief.** The team out of our Rice Lake, Wisconsin, facility has done an exceptional job spreading positivity and finding creative ways to help its community, including taking out an ad to congratulate the 2020 graduates of Rice Lake Senior High, setting up a blood drive through the Red Cross and securing and donating PPE to local hospitals.



**Hometown  
Charity  
Spotlight**

The team was also able to support both St. Vincent de Paul Pantry & Kitchen and Ruby's Pantry, which combined provide food for nearly 2,800 local families each month and more than 1,200 hot lunches monthly. The team encourages everyone to consider supporting their own local food pantries, which have seen a 50% higher demand since the pandemic started.

To further the spirit of giving, the Rice Lake team is also working with local radio stations to sponsor an auction with proceeds going to COVID-19 relief and programming that urges patience, togetherness and progress. Congratulations to the Rice Lake team for the excellent work and for being great stewards of your community!



### **Arlington team sews face masks for donation.**

In late 2019, Quanex expanded its manufacturing footprint and capacity in Texas to position Quanex to better serve this market. After months of hard work and careful planning, the Texas team successfully opened an expanded window and door screen facility to Arlington, Texas.

Not long after, the pandemic posed another challenge—and this team rose to meet it head on. While continuing to meet the needs of our Texas customers, the Arlington teams have been busy utilizing extra capacity to sew masks for donation to local organizations in need of them.

**Continue the support.** Over the next couple of months, we'll be promoting the charities we're supporting on the Quanex LinkedIn page. If you wish to join in furthering our support these local nonprofits, head to our page where you'll find a full list of links.

Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank (Akron, Ohio)  
Berea Kids Eat (Berea, Kentucky)  
Berea Senior Center (Berea, Kentucky)  
Catholic Charities Pandemic Relief Fund (St. Cloud, Minnesota)  
Chatsworth Fire Department (Chatsworth, Illinois)  
Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County (Sharon, Pennsylvania)  
Country Neighbor Program (Orwell, Ohio)  
Dallas Meals on Wheels (Dallas, Texas)  
Edgar County Community Foundation (Paris, Illinois)  
Edgar County Emergency Services & Disaster Agency (Paris, Illinois)  
Feeding America Riverside (Riverside, California)  
Food Bank of Iowa (Des Moines, Iowa)  
Food Bank of the Rockies (Denver, Colorado)  
Grace Pantry (Cambridge, Ohio)  
Greater Chehalis Food Bank (Chehalis, Washington)  
Hotel Inc. (Bowling Green, Kentucky)  
Kids Meals Houston (Houston, Texas)  
Meals on Wheels (Cambridge, Ohio)  
Milaca Area Pantry (Milaca, Minnesota)  
Molalla Service Center (Molalla, Oregon)

Mounds View Schools Education Foundation (Shoreview, Minnesota)  
North Land Municipal Ambulance Inc. (Luck, Wisconsin)  
Northern Illinois Food Bank (Geneva, Illinois)  
Northwest Harvest (Seattle, Washington)  
Old Man Rivers Mission (Parkersburg, West Virginia)  
Richland Wilkin Food Pantry (Wahpeton, North Dakota)  
Richmond Police Department (Richmond, Illinois)  
Ruby's Pantry (North Branch, Minnesota)  
Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (Sacramento, California)  
Second Harvest Heartland (St. Paul, Minnesota)  
Second Servings (Bellaire, Texas)  
SELCAS (St. Fairbury, Illinois)  
Shenango Valley Meals on Wheels (Sharon, Pennsylvania)  
St. Vincent de Paul Pantry & Kitchen (Rice Lake, Wisconsin)  
St. Mary's Food Bank (Phoenix, Arizona)  
St. Stephen's River Bend Food Bank (Dubuque, Iowa)  
Stanford Settlement Neighborhood Center (Sacramento, California)  
Tacoma Rescue Mission (Tacoma, Washington)  
The Geauga Hunger Task Force (Chardon, Ohio)  
Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank (Toledo, Ohio)

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