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SPLASHING WATER...

No shower is water-tight. Our best analogy is like selecting an automobile. You might select a good quality American or Japanese vehicle which is pleasant to look at and a great day to day driver, or you can select a truly exotic Italian sports car, which is breathtaking to behold but perhaps not quite as practical. It's the same with shower enclosures. Sliding enclosures and framed swing doors do a great job at keeping as much of the splashed water in your shower as possible. Heavy Glass and Cast Glass have gaps that can allow a little splashed water to escape your enclosure. Here's a run-through of our enclosures.

Sliding Door Enclosures

All of our sliding door enclosures, including the Craftsman, Cardinal, Euro and Apollo series all provide the same level of water-escape protection. The shingling effect on the two doors, as well as deep channels and a sloped bottom rail all help to keep water in the shower.

Swing Door Enclosures

These units feature magnetic catches and sloped channels at the bottom of the door and do a great job helping to seep water in the shower.

TruFit and Heavy Glass Swing Doors

These enclosures use 3/8" heavy glass panels with no door jamb. There is typically a 1/8" gap on either side of the door, as well as a gap under the door. These are places where splashed water may escape the shower. Generally, it's a small amount. Of course, if you point your shower head at the gap, the water will, of course, pour right out of the shower. The balance is that it provides a more open look with less metal on your shower.

There are vinyl extrusions that can go between the door and panel, vinyl wipes that can go at the bottom of the door, between the door and wall, and so forth. These help to keep water in the shower, but there is a small aesthetic trade off. We leave it up to the customer to determine how much or little vinyl they would like around their shower door. These can usually be added after installation if the customer changes their mind.

It is extremely important for TruFit and Heavy Glass units that the sill under the door slope into the shower. If it is perfectly level under a swing door (for example, on a basic tub), water that flows down the door will pool under the door and drain both in and out of the enclosure. We offer a dam strip (a shallow oval extrusion), that can be installed to help keep water from flowing out of the shower, but splashed water may still escape.

Skyline/Empire/Ultimate Enclosures

The Skyline enclosure features one sliding door and one fixed panel. The gap between the door and panel is larger than on a typical slider because the 3/4" rod that the doors slide on is between the panel and door, leaving a little over 1" gap. We offer a vinyl extrusion that can go between them, but it's a question of form vs. function. Again, if this unit is installed on a tub and the tub sill doesn't slope back into the tub, water can leak out of the enclosure. The dam strip can help some, but it's best if the sill slopes back into the tub.

Cast Glass Enclosures

The cast glass and Ultimate Optique glass is our most stunning glass option. Nothing compares with its rich texture. As such, because of the variations in the glass created by the casting process, generally there is more of a 1/8" gap around the door as opposed to the 1/16" gap on standard heavy glass units. Because of the texture generally you can't add vinyl door jamb or door sweeps because they just wouldn't fit on the edge of the glass. You need to consider too the shower head location. It's better if the shower head points sideways to the door as opposed to directly at the door.

(Author's note: I have a cast glass enclosure in my master bath. For us, as it is with the vast majority of our clients, a little water escaping our shower is not a big deal. I wouldn't let a two year old in there free to point the detachable shower nozzle any direction they pleased, but day to day for us it's OK. We know, for example, not to leave an iPhone just outside the gap.)

So, it depends on your goal. If an extremely beautiful shower is your goal, cast glass is the answer. If you've got hardwood bathroom floors and are really concerned with water escaping, perhaps a sliding door or a Craftsman or Cardinal series enclosure is right for you.