

# REAL ESTATE

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## Retractable awnings boon for decks

Automatic retraction is a feature on some

**Q:** I would like some type of awning over my deck and a large sliding glass door for blocking the sun's heat and rain. How durable and effective are the automatic retractable awnings that need no supports? **H.W.**

**A:** Retractable awnings are an excellent choice for decks and patios. They can be as wide as 40 feet and can extend out from the house wall up to 12 feet or just as far as you need it. They need no supports that get in your way.

Not only do they shield your deck and party guests from unexpected summer showers, but they block the sun's heat and fading rays. Extending the awning out over a large glass patio door can lower the indoor room temperature by eight degrees and protect your furniture from fading.

When you crank the retractable awning open, an elbow joint in each of two lateral support arms straightens. This extends the awning out over the deck. The arms are spring-loaded to keep the awning fabric stretched tight.

When the awning is retracted, the fabric

rolls up and is stored in a small square box high on the house wall. With special covers, it is barely perceptible. The arms are fully collapsed at the elbows, so they lay flush against the wall and are hidden too.

The least expensive awnings use a hand crank mechanism to open and close them. For easier operation, you can get an electric motor drive with a hand-held remote control, like a TV remote.

Special sun and wind sensors and 24-hour timer controls are also available. These automatically extend or retract the awning depending on weather conditions. For example, you can preset it to close the awning at a particular wind speed to protect the awning.

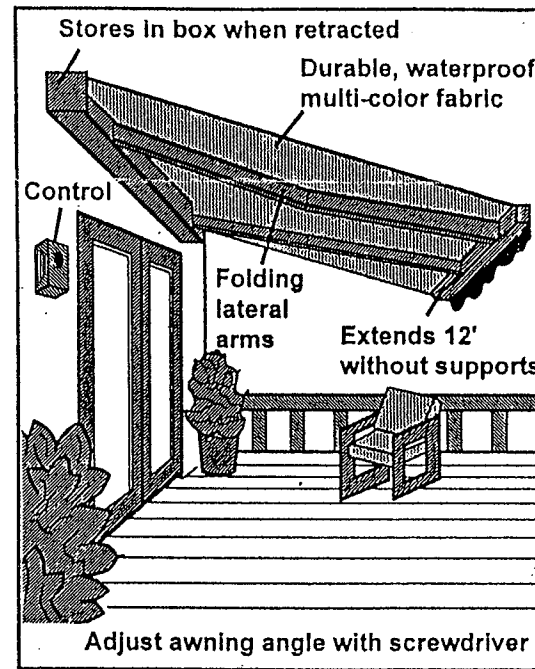
Most designs are supported by a single torsion rod that is attached to the wall. This makes installation simple. By just turning a few screws, you can adjust the angle of the awning to give the desired head clearance and shading.

The lateral arms are usually made of special lightweight, high-strength aluminum alloys. With an anodized or baked-on finish, they are completely maintenance-free.

There are many choices of fabrics for retractable awnings depending on your specific needs.

The most common fabric for residential use is solution-dyed acrylic. Laminated polyester materials are more waterproof for hard rains, but they are heavier and require a larger storage box.

Write for Utility Bills Update No. 670 listing 11 manufacturers of retractable



Special to The News-Sentinel

Retractable awning is easy to install.

awnings, do-it-yourself installation instructions, fabric selector guide, detailed product information and prices. Please include \$2 and a self-addressed envelope.

**Q:** I have read where air leaks along the sill plate in a house are the greatest air