

Used Wind Turbine Buyers Guide

By: Matthew Gladen

Purchasing a used wind energy system can be a very daunting process. Advertised as used wind turbines, second hand wind turbines, remanufactured wind turbines, or even refurbished wind turbines how can someone determine which used wind equipment is good and which is bad? How can someone determine what the difference is between them? How can someone keep from being "scammed"?

Used wind systems can be excellent deals and provide their owners with years of electricity at a price substantially less than a new system of similar nameplate capacity, but a hastily purchased used turbine can cause the owner headaches and financial loss.

First it is important to understand that buying a used wind generator is not like buying a used car or boat. Cars and boats become available frequently for many reasons; the owner can no longer make the payments and the property is repossessed, the owner becomes tired of the color, wants more power or room, or a newer model is available are some of the many reasons a person may want to sell their used car or boat. In the case of wind systems it is unlikely the owner is selling their equipment because they have become tired with it or no longer like the model or style.

Most used wind systems available have become available for one of the following reasons: The turbine is at the end of its current useful lifespan or the turbine does not produce the power that was expected upon installation. Less common reasons a second hand wind energy generator may become available might include the replacement of the current turbine for a larger system, or perhaps a property is sold and the new owners don't like the wind turbines. Whatever the reason a wind turbine has become available, it is important for a prospective buyer to understand the exact reason the system became available and is being sold.

A wind turbine that is being sold at the end of its lifespan is very common. These machines are the most affordable and are in high demand, but an individual should not consider the purchase of this type of wind turbine if their intent is to install the unit for long term energy production. Wind turbines at the end of their useful lifespan are typically purchased for one of three following reasons:

- the turbine is going to be used by a college or other wind energy professional for training or educational purposes
- the turbine is going to be taken apart and used for spare parts
- the turbine is going to be remanufactured or rebuilt to original manufacturer specifications

Properly remanufactured or refurbished wind turbines are the best options for those people who are considering a used wind energy system. When a used wind turbine is properly remanufactured the unit can produce years of electricity at a price substantially less than a new system that produces similar amounts of power. However, buyers must use caution when selecting a remanufactured wind turbine also.

Many quality remanufacturers exist. Unfortunately there are plenty of horror stories of people who thought they were purchasing a quality remanufactured product and ended up with little more than a freshly painted wind turbine that had not been completely remanufactured. It is important for anyone considering a remanufactured wind turbine to ask questions. Ask questions about the remanufacturer, and exactly what was done in the remanufacturing process. Be cautious if the seller and the remanufacturer are the same person or company. Wind turbines are not machines that an average person is going to remanufacture. Remanufacturing services are typically offered by companies that specifically work with wind generator manufacturing and remanufacturing equipment, allowing them access to the customized parts and equipment required to properly remanufacture a used wind turbine for restored long term use.

Ultimately, if you are considering a used wind energy system, you need to begin by determining the type of equipment you are interested in (i.e. ready to install equipment that will last a long time or equipment that requires work or repair). Then ask questions and use common sense when considering the answers. Consider the reputation of the company and or the individuals you are working with. Are they insured? Who are they? What do they do? Consider the detail you received about the remanufacturing process, and the length and strength of the warranty on the remanufactured equipment. And of course do your research and verification. A couple of questions and some additional research and background can help you ensure a positive wind energy experience.

Matthew Gladen is certified by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association as a Wind Site Assessor and is a member of the executive management team of [FESCO Direct LLC](#). FESCO Direct is a leading provider new, used and remanufactured [wind energy equipment](#). The firm specializes in equipment distribution offering discounted or wholesale pricing to renewable energy professionals, but for the convenience of retail clients offers general project consulting and turnkey installation services in select US and European markets.