



Life as a Window:

How long will a window or door last? Most of today's windows are made from a frame material and an insulating glass "sandwich" - each component subject to wear, weathering and potential failure. Weather-stripping in the frame and moving parts can wear out with use. An insulating glass panel may suffer a broken seal after years of expansion and contraction with temperature changes – creating a "fogged" look as moisture accumulates between the glass panes.

According to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), some windows can last up to 50 years. Some of the factors that go into the determination include:

- Frame material
- Quality construction practices & building style
- Product quality
- Climate and exposure
- Routine care & maintenance
- Replacement of parts that wear with use

With AAMA Certified product that's cared for, you can expect to increase the service life. To use the program developed by NIST go to www.PATHNET.org. You'll find durability estimates for windows, doors and most other major building materials – customized by zip code.

With a little care, your windows can last longer and look better. Here are a few maintenance highlights and guidelines that will help keep your windows and doors working their best and looking great.

Frame Cleaning

Keeping your windows and doors clean means more than just the glass. Here are some helpful tips for cleaning your window and door frames effectively without damaging them:

- Vacuum dirt from sill and track areas before washing

- Clean window and door frames with a mixture of mild dish soap* and water
- Abrasive or caustic cleaners or solvents are never recommended because they might cause permanent damage to the finish
- Mild, non-abrasive soaps are usually safest for most dirt and stain removal
- Always rinse completely with clear water and wipe dry
- Check to make sure that drainage or “weep” holes are always clear of dirt or obstructions-both inside and outside the window or door in the bottom of the frame. Note: If the window is “stacked,” there may be weep holes between units

* Ivory® is an example of a mild dish soap. Always test cleaners in an inconspicuous area first

Glass Care

Glass care today is more important than ever. Insulating, low-e or heat reflective glass requires proper maintenance to ensure their complete effectiveness.

- Never use any petroleum-based cleaners, or caustic chemicals on your glass
- Never use a razor blade, putty knife or abrasive pad to clean the glass
- Do not use a high-pressure spray nozzle when rinsing your windows after washing
- All of these practices may damage the glass surface, the insulating glass seal, or component parts
- Clean glass with a mixture of mild dish soap* and water. Rinse completely with clear water, then wipe dry with a soft cloth to avoid water spots
- Avoid washing glass in direct sunlight
- Abrasive or caustic cleaners are never recommended because they might cause permanent damage to the finish or the glass.
- Clean screens by first removing, then washing on a flat, clean surface with mild soap and water and a soft brush. Rinse, wipe dry and reinstall

* Ivory® is an example of a mild dish soap. Always test cleaners in an inconspicuous area first

Frame Color

Vinyl frames or vinyl cladding may be affected by solar radiation or chemicals that can cause color change.

Frame Color Change

- Chemicals can cause PVC discoloration. All fuels, solvents, bleaches or corrosive chemicals must be avoided
- In dry climates with high levels of solar energy, a color change can be expected with PVC, like most any finish
- A color change has no effect on the strength or structural integrity of the PVC
- Over time and with exposure to normal humidity, yellowing most often returns to a white color

Color Retention Standards

Aging and weathering factors can affect the color of all window frame and hardware materials. AAMA has established an industry color standard for what is and isn't acceptable. AAMA-American Architectural Manufacturers Association. Visit AAMA on the web at www.aamanet.org

AAMA/Industry Color Standard

- Some degree of color change is built in to industry standards
- Color change tolerances are covered by AAMA standards for painted aluminum, PVC and other finishes
- These standards take into account natural aging and weathering factors and describe the allowable change in ways that can be scientifically measured

Smooth Operation

To ensure that your windows and doors open, close, lock and unlock easily for years to come, follow these helpful maintenance tips to keep your windows and doors operating smoothly.

- Moving parts in hardware components and tracks and rollers should be lubricated periodically in accordance with the manufacturer's maintenance instructions. In salt-air environments this can mean at least monthly
- Check weather stripping around operable window and door panels and be sure it seals evenly.
- On sliding doors and windows, make certain track areas are kept clean. Vacuum as needed to clear dirt of any debris
- Adjustable sliding door rollers for proper height clearances. Most door rollers can be adjusted with a screwdriver through access holes in either the end of side of the sliding panel at the bottom
- Rolling screen doors may be adjusted to run smoothly. Use a screwdriver – often in all four corners - to make adjustment
- After making door roller adjustments, it may be necessary to make adjustments in the lock strike placement. Most strikes may be adjusted by loosening screw fasteners, moving strike plate and tightening. Check for proper lock operation

Condensation

Window condensation can be a natural occurrence. It can be a warning that excessive moisture is present and may cause structural deterioration and the possibility of mold growth.

- Condensation on the inside of a window is a result of a higher air moisture content contacting lower temperatures on the glass. The higher the interior humidity and the lower the outside window temperature, the more condensation can occur
- Excessive interior humidity can lead to structural damage and health concerns if high moisture levels are sustained inside wall cavities. Wood rot, mold and mildew can result
- Check all sash for smooth adequate operation. Add integrated window ventilators and air exchange devices if necessary
- Regularly use exhaust fans especially when showering
- Install and use a dehumidifier. Use ceiling fans to circulate air
- Open windows and doors whenever practical or possible to allow interior moisture to escape

Drainage Systems

Windows and doors often have a simple drainage system or "weep" system designed right into the product. These water drainage pathways must be kept clear and clean for the window or door to operate correctly.

- It's normal for water to accumulate in the sill or track area with wind driven rain. The water is intended to drain to the outside as water builds up or outside pressure subsides
- Keep sill or track areas clean of dirt or debris
- Make sure that outside and inside "weep" holes and sill area are kept clear of any dirt, stucco, sand, or building materials
- Use a small, soft bottlebrush to clear openings
- Windows can be vulnerable to water leakage at the corners if not properly maintained. If a crack appears, it should be sealed with a good grade of sealant according to the manufacturer's instructions

Key Do's and Don'ts

DO: Clean the frame surfaces.

DON'T: Use a razor blade, putty knife or abrasive pad.

DO: Use a glass cleaner or mild detergent.

DON'T: Use any petroleum-based cleaners or solvents.

DO: Clean tracks and weepholes.

DON'T: Use oil-based lubricants or damage weep hole covers/baffles.

DO: Check weather-stripping and hardware.

DON'T: Live with poor performing components.

DO: Clean your insulating glass with proper cleaning agents.

DON'T: Add attachments to window or glass without approval from the window manufacturer.

DO: Choose certified windows and exterior glass doors.

DON'T: Settle for products that do not meet important air, water, structural, forced entry and thermal performance standards.

DO: Read and understand your manufacturer's warranty and install per the manufacturers instructions.