



Window and Glazing Topics – Maintenance of PVC-U windows

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Window and Glazing Topics – Maintenance of PVC-U windows

1. Introduction

There is often a requirement for maintenance information on PVC-U windows from domestic and specification customers. As a general rule PVC-U windows have an extremely low maintenance requirement compared to other material types but there is still a need to maintain the product to get the best out of it.

2. Durability

PVC-U

PVC-U is an exceptionally durable material and the product life is estimated to be in excess of 25 years. Installations in mainland Europe have been monitored over a 45-year period and show no significant degradation of the PVC-U. This durability is unaffected by coastal or saline environments but can be affected by heavy industrial pollution.

PVC-U profiles are stabilised against UV light but some colour fading is unavoidable over a period of time. Most products will conform to the requirements of BS 7413 with respect to colour changes. It is important to note that the raw material used for most UK windows and doors is designed for use in Northern latitudes and should not be used in Mediterranean or other high UV conditions.

Reinforcement

Where steel is used for reinforcing this is generally isolated from the environment in a specially sealed chamber to avoid any corrosion concerns. The steel used for reinforcement should conform to BS 7413: 1991. Where it is not possible to isolate the reinforcement then aluminium reinforcing is generally used to prevent corrosion and this aluminium should conform to the requirements of BS 7413: 1991.

Hardware and fittings

By their very nature hardware and fittings are exposed to the environment and can suffer corrosion. This is particularly true in coastal, saline or heavily industrial polluted areas.

Gaskets and seals

All gaskets and seals are manufactured from EPDM rubber or TPE (thermoplastic elastomers) and should remain effective for at least ten years.

3. Maintenance

PVC-U

Maintenance of the PVC-U profile should consist of a regular cleaning with a mild non-abrasive detergent solution. Abrasive cleaners must not be used.

Hardware and fittings

Regular maintenance of the exposed metal parts e.g., cleaning to remove dust and grit, is required and the application of a light oil will maximise the life of the exposed metal parts. Specific maintenance points are given below.

Gaskets and seals

Maintenance of gaskets and seals should consist of a regular cleaning with a mild non-abrasive detergent solution.

4. Repair and replacement

Main profiles

Repair kits are available for small marks to the main PVC-U profile but as a general rule no user repair is possible to damaged PVC-U profile.

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Hardware and fittings

If furniture or fixings are damaged or badly corroded, they can be replaced, either by removing the fixing screws or by drilling out and replacing rivets (if used). In both cases the use of the correct replacement fastener is essential. Please contact the manufacturer.

Gaskets and seals

PVC-U windows can generally be reglazed, without the removal of the complete window or sash, in the event of breakage of the sealed unit or for any other reason.

Most gaskets and weather stripping can be renewed or replaced without the removal of the complete window or sash.

Reglazing or gasket replacement should be carried out by installers using materials recommended by the manufacturer.

5. Service and maintenance

All service and maintenance should be carried out via the supplying fabricator or installer.

Lubrication

Casement windows (outward opening)

- The hinges require regular maintenance and oiling. All areas of the hinge should be kept clean and clear of dirt and an annual application of a light oil to the pivot points and tracks is recommended.
- Locks and fastening devices should be given an annual application of a light oil to ensure free running and closing.
- The tightness of all screws and fixings should also be checked.

Tilt/Turn windows

- All hinges and locking points should be kept clean and clear of dirt and an annual application of a light oil is recommended.
- The tightness of all screws and fixings should also be checked.

Residential doors

- All moving areas of the lock should be given an annual application of light oil. The keeps should be given a coating of petroleum jelly or similar.
- The locking cams of the door can be adjusted using a flat bladed screwdriver to improve the sealing.
- Hinges and letter plates should be given an annual application of light oil.
- Do not oil the cylinder.
- The tightness of all screws and fixings should also be checked.

General parts

- Clean and lightly oil all external metal parts with an annual application of a light oil.