

Openings

This section details the maintenance needed to keep the openings on your home such as doors, windows, and vents, weathertight and looking their best.

EXTERIOR DOORS

The exterior doors in your home may include a variety of door types, materials, and finishes to complement your home's entry, openings to the yard or balconies, and utility areas. Regularly inspect the condition and operation of the doors, hardware, frames, and weatherstripping to ensure that the building interior is well-protected and secure.



Interior View of Front Door

Important Information

- **Refinishing.** When door refinishing or repainting is necessary, do not overlook the door edges.
- **Additions.** If you choose to add alarms or additional security devices, do not compromise the weathertightness of the door and frame.
- **Protect from Water.** Prolonged moisture is a major enemy of exterior doors, and hosing down doors is not advised. Direct sprinklers away from doors and/or use drip irrigation in these areas.

- **Clean Gently.** Use mild household cleaners on your doors and *never* use abrasive chemicals on the doors or hardware. Consult a professional for specific products and applications to help extend the life of your door.
- **Inspect Regularly.** Check doors during major storms or windy conditions to gauge the performance and condition of weatherstripping, thresholds, and adjoining sealants. Make adjustments or repairs as necessary. Annually examine the sealants located between the door frame and wall finishes and repair or replace when needed.
- **Thresholds.** Door thresholds are located at the bottom of the door, and are designed to close the gap between the bottom of the door and the floor construction. Inspect regularly for water intrusion and ensure that the threshold is continuous and securely attached.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Dust and clean composite doors as part of routine cleaning. Do not use water; consult the manufacturer for recommended cleaning products.	Regularly
When needed, apply a low sheen cleaner and finish protectant to composite doors to remove surface contaminants and protect the finish.	Regularly
When vacuuming, run the nozzle along the tracks of all sliding doors. This will help remove debris and help prevent damage to rollers. This will also allow for proper drainage during rains.	Monthly
Inspect weatherstripping to ensure it forms a tight seal against the door surface when the door is shut.	Quarterly and in hot and cold seasons
Remove the snap-in closure over a portion of the sill track to clear dirt accumulated there.	Twice per year
Check door finishes. Touch-up and reseal as needed.	Twice per year
Use a spray silicone lubricant to keep your sliding door hardware functioning smoothly and reduce possible friction that might cause excessive wear.	Twice per year
Clean and adjust the hardware if door latches, locks, and rollers are difficult to operate or if the door is not sliding properly.	Twice per year
Examine the sealants located between the door frame and wall finish and repair or replace when needed.	Annually

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Refinish exterior of wood faced doors.	Every 2–3 years or as needed

Effects of Deferred Maintenance

Failure to maintain the doors will result in improper functioning and shorter life.

GARAGE DOORS

Garage doors are important for the security of your home, so keep them in good working condition. Metal garage doors are typically constructed of steel with a low maintenance, painted finish. As with all of the products installed in your home, become familiar with the manufacturer's recommendations for using and caring for the door and opener.



Garage Door

Important Information

- **Metal Surface Touch-Up.** Metal doors with a manufactured coating do not require repainting. However, should the door become pitted or blemished from wind-blown dirt or debris, touch-up the finish with a matching auto paint to prevent the aluminum base from being exposed to the elements.
- **Close Doors During Inclement Weather.** Large amounts of heat can be lost, even when the garage is unheated and lightly insulated. Also, rain may saturate and distort wood overhead garage doors and frames.
- **Prevent Obstructions.** Take care to avoid any interior storage that might obstruct or damage the tracks and guide. Do not block the light beam at the base of the door or place items in line with the door base that can interrupt closing of door. If the garage door will not close, inspect the safety light beam and remove any obstruction. Realign if necessary.



Note: In the event of a power failure use the manual release cord to open the door.



Warning: If rust or deterioration of the door springs is discovered, repair or replacement should only be done by a professional service person, as these springs are typically under tension.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Clean the light beam assembly at the base of the garage door.	Monthly
Examine for any loose track or spring mounting bolts or screws, as these can affect the door alignment and operation.	Quarterly
Lubricate the moving parts of the doors.	Twice per year
Check and tighten the door hardware. Inspect for rust, deterioration, and distortion of door counterbalance springs. A water-displacement spray will help control rust.	Annually
Check surface for pitting or blemishes. Touch-up as needed.	Annually and as needed
Examine the finish on wood doors. Touch-up or repaint as needed. Repaint painted doors as conditions indicate.	Annually
If installed, check supplemental hurricane hardware and fasteners for proper quantity, fit, and condition.	Prior to hurricane season (April 1st) or per manufacturer's recommendations
If installed, ensure that automatically activated hurricane attachments are functioning properly. Clean as needed.	Prior to hurricane season (April 1st) or per manufacturer's recommendations
Clean with a hose and spray nozzle to remove dust and dirt from the garage door. Use a mild detergent to remove stubborn grime from the door if needed.	As needed

Effects of Deferred Maintenance

Deferred maintenance of your garage doors will detract from the appearance of your home, wear out the working parts and surfaces of your doors, and increase energy bills.

VENTS

There are several types of vents found in various locations on the exterior of your home: attic ventilation (such as soffit vents), kitchen and bathroom exhausts, etc. All are important for the proper ventilation of your home. Many vents have a “flapper” under the hood to prevent pest entry and cold or hot outside air “back draft.”



Attic Vent

Important Information

- **Prevent Obstructions.** Take care not to obstruct vents with shrubs or anything left leaning against the side of the house.
- **Do Not Paint Vent Screening.** When painting, do not paint the attic vent screening.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Lubricate the flapper hinge with a product such as WD-40 or equivalent.	As needed, typically every 2 years
Have vent pipes cleaned professionally.	At least every 3 years

Effects of Deferred Maintenance

Failure to maintain may result in the vents rusting. A permanently open vent can allow birds or rats to nest.

WINDOWS

Windows are an important component in your home's energy efficiency, beauty, and security. Windows are typically made of vinyl or aluminum, and will last longer with regular inspection and care.



Window

Important Information

- **Do Not Seal Weep Holes.** Window frames are designed to collect water during a rainstorm and drain it out at the bottom through weep holes. It is normal to find some water within the inside track during heavy, windblown rain. *Do not caulk the weep holes when caulking around the window!*
- **Clean Gently.** Do not use hydrocarbon cleaners such as gasoline, kerosene, or oil to clean vinyl windows and frames. Avoid using abrasive cleansers and scrubbers.
- **Tint Cautiously.** Refer to the window manufacturer's documentation before tinting any windows. Some window warranties may be voided by aftermarket tinting.

Cleaning Tips

Always begin with the most mild solution and test the cleaning method in a non-conspicuous location. Keep cleaning solutions away from the adjacent walls, as wall finishes can be harmed by some cleansers. During routine cleaning, inspect the interior for stains that may indicate water intrusion. Pull back the carpeting at thresholds to observe the tack strip or floor sheathing for staining.

Aluminum Frames

Clean with warm soapy water. Clean stubborn stains with mineral spirits as recommended by the manufacturer. Solvents and abrasives can destroy sealants, gaskets, and finishes. Aluminum surfaces that have become dull can usually be restored with a quality car cleaner and wax.

Vinyl Frames

Use a soft cloth or sponge and mild dish soap and water. Rinse with clean water and wipe dry. For stubborn stains, refer to product information or contact the manufacturer for recommendations.

Glass and Glazing

Wash with a mild window washing solution. Clean interior glass with a premixed vinegar-based cleaning solution (1 part white vinegar to 1 part water) and a soft towel. Rinse with clear water. Avoid using ammonia or alcohol-based cleaners, as they attract moisture and dirt. Do not clean in direct sunlight. Avoid power-washing, as it can damage seals and weatherstripping and result in leaks to the interior.

Remove grease, oil, tape, and paint with non-abrasive cleansers. Apply cleanser with a soft cloth or towel and rub the area, taking care not to allow the cleanser or solvents to come in contact with the adjacent framing. Do not use razor blades, as they can scratch the glass and cause it to break.

Hardware

Most finishes can be cleaned with water and mild soap. Apply a thin layer of dry lubricant (such as paraffin, silicone, or graphite finish, as recommended by the hardware manufacturer) to the clean, dry surface. Avoid using oily lubricants, as they attract dust and grime. Use graphite on locks, keyways, and hinges. *Note:* Vinegars, citrus-based cleaners, and paint removers can damage hardware finishes.

Recommended Maintenance Tasks	Frequency
Clean windows and frames as part of routine cleaning.	Regularly
Clean window tracks of any debris to keep the weep holes free of blockage to prevent water from leaking into your home. Always inspect before the rainy season.	Regularly, with routine cleaning
Lubricate window tracks with silicone or paraffin sprays. Avoid oil, as it attracts dust and lint.	Twice per year and as needed
Check the sealants between the window frame and wall finish, and repair or replace when needed.	Annually, before the rainy season
Examine double or triple glazed windows to ensure that the seal has not deteriorated or been damaged. Replace panel when the seal is compromised.	Annually

Effects of Deferred Maintenance

Deferred maintenance will result in diminished appearance, more difficult opening and closing of windows, and possible water damage.