



Why maintenance is important

Looking after your aluminium windows and doors not only keeps them in good condition, it is part of any standard maintenance regime to maximise their life and performance, and to maintain product warranties. This guide provides general guidelines for common situations faced by homeowners.

Maintenance recommendations are similar for powder coated and anodized surface finishes. The difference between powder coating and anodizing can be likened to paint and dye. Powder coat is applied to the surface of the metal like a paint, and anodising is etched into the surface of the metal like a die, so is a little tougher yet thinner. This allows a few slightly different approaches to cleaning in a couple of situations, as described below.



Avoid damage, rather than repair

If your new house or renovation is under construction, check that your builder protects the joinery at all stages during the building process. It's much easier and far cheaper to avoid damage than it is to try to repair it. Inspect the windows and doors on delivery for any damage before they are accepted. And see that windows and doors are installed soon after delivery to site, as they are more likely to get accidentally damaged when stored for extended periods.



Protect the frame and glass

Once installed, your builder must mask the inside and outside of each window and door with masking tape and tough polyethene film to protect the frame and the glass from damage for the rest of the construction period. Apart from the physical damage from other building materials, major damage can also be caused by concrete and mortar used in brickwork or plaster cladding.



Handle with gloves at all times

Ask your builder to use disposable gloves when handling your windows and doors to help protect the surface from any substances on their hands, such as sunscreen, sealants, paints, oils and solvents. Most good builders know to do this.

Regular washing

To maintain the good looks of your aluminium windows, each window and door unit needs regular washing all over – not just the parts that are sheltered from the rain. In fact, looking after your windows is very much like looking after a new car – a regular wash keeps your investment in smart condition.



Check your surroundings

Unless your house is close to the seaside, near an industrial area, or near where agrichemicals are stored, washing down your windows about every three months should be sufficient. Certainly, if there is a workmanship or powder coat quality issue that affects the surface, the warranty will not be affected if the joinery is not cleaned at this frequency. Always discuss the terms of the warranty with your window supplier.



Use high quality tools

To wash your windows and doors, simply use a good quality, soft bristled brush as sold by general hardware stores, and a dilute solution of mild, pH-neutral liquid dishwashing detergent, available from any supermarket. Some brushes have in-built detergent dispensers and connect directly to the garden tap. These brushes make it really easy to rinse off the detergent bubbles, which is a very important part of the care process.



Take care drying

Dry the glass off with a window squeegee and soft, dry cloth if you want to avoid any smears developing. And be very observant while cleaning, as micro grit contained in cleaning cloths can cause scratches.



Don't use scrapers or solvents

Windblown deposits

You will need to wash aluminium more frequently if you live near the seaside, a building site, or an industrial area that creates regular build up of damaging substances like sea salt, lime or other chemicals. If not cleaned off, these can cause deterioration to the surface coating, mainly as a result of the grime build-up and associated contaminated moisture, which attacks the surface.



Deposits on anodised aluminium

For anodised aluminium, more difficult grime deposits may require the use of a mild abrasive such as pumice powder and water. And if you find a greasy deposit, cleaning may require a soft cloth dipped in white spirits. It's important to thoroughly rinse the windows and doors after cleaning to ensure you remove any spirit residues. We do not recommend you use solvents or pumice on a powder coated finish – a mild soap and soft cloth will have to suffice.

What not to use?

Never use emery paper, sandpaper, steel wool or other highly abrasive materials on any aluminium, nor acid or alkaline cleaners, or any chemical cleaners, as they can damage the anodised or powder coated finish.

Be careful with emulsion cleaners as they too can attack anodised coatings – use only in consultation with companies who are specialists in anodised aluminium.



Washing whole buildings

There are special cleaning products available to wash whole buildings. But it's important you check whether these products are suitable for aluminium joinery and glass or not, as some products can damage the surface finish.

If you hire a commercial cleaning company, ensure they provide you with written assurances that they will only use products safe for aluminium joinery and glass.

If they don't provide a written assurance, do not use their services. Sadly, there are many instances of commercial cleaning companies causing damage to windows and glass (and other parts of buildings), resulting in repairs that are extremely difficult and expensive.

Cleaning paint splashes

When painting near windows and doors, cover and protect them with a drop sheet, cheaply available from most paint shops. If you or your painter accidentally splash paint onto windows and glass, act quickly and remove paint splashes with a soft cloth soaked in water.

Regular washing

We strongly recommend you protect your windows and doors from sunscreen stains by using gloves when handling aluminium.



Some sunscreens containing semi-conducting metal oxides, such as titanium dioxide or zinc oxide, which can damage protective finishes. They can accelerate the degradation of that surface up to 100 times faster than is normal, leaving behind the indelible images of the handprint.

If this does happen, thoroughly wash down the affected area with soapy water and rinse it clean.

Key Facts



Regular washing of your aluminium windows, and extra care when it is a corrosive environment, means you will meet the warranty terms associated with the surface finish.



In normal conditions, we recommend washing aluminium windows every **three months**.



Never use abrasive materials or solvents on powder coated finishes.



Sunscreen can leave permanent marks on aluminium. **Use gloves when handling**, and, if affected, wash the sunscreen off immediately with warm, soapy water.



Ensure your builder keeps the joinery in the same condition as it was delivered and protects it at every stage, because **most surface finish issues occur during construction** from damage by other contractors.



If windblown residues settle on aluminium – such as cement dust in a new subdivision, sea salt near the coast, or agrichemicals – you will need to wash your windows more frequently.



Some commercial house cleaning products can damage aluminium. If a commercial house cleaner won't provide you with a written assurance that their cleaning products are safe for aluminium, don't use their services.