

Even natural beauty needs a little help



A BWF Timber Window Accreditation Scheme Fact Card on

MAINTENANCE

Including:

- Coating Systems
- Hardware
- Glazing unit
- Weatherseals
- How often you need to do it

Why you need to maintain your windows

BWF Accredited Timber Windows are designed and engineered to meet the requirements and expectations of modern living and construction. Any high-performance, engineered product - whether it is a boiler, washing machine, car or window (of any material) – will need some form of maintenance in order to ensure its long life. Failure to keep to a planned maintenance schedule may at best ruin the window's appearance and, at worst, could lead to the early deterioration of the components.

The natural beauty of timber as a material for windows means that, if maintenance is carried out regularly, it will retain its visual appeal for a lifetime.

What you need to maintain

Unless correctly maintained, there is a reasonable chance that anything in a product that can go wrong will go wrong. It is therefore necessary to check all aspects of a window. The most important elements to maintain are the coating system and the hardware. However, it is advisable to check the whole window (interior and exterior), including the glazing unit and weatherseals, for any signs of deterioration. If there are any causes for concern, follow these guidelines. If the problem persists, contact the window manufacturer.

The type and level of maintenance required will depend on the window's location and exposure to the weather. A window in a south facing position in a coastal area will deteriorate far quicker than one that is north facing and sheltered from the wind and rain.

Coating Systems

The window manufacturer will be able to offer guidance on the maintenance cycle for individual windows within your property.

It is important to remember that regular, minimal maintenance will make re-decorating the windows a far easier job.

a. Mould and algae - All windows can suffer from mould and algae caused by airborne spores, which settle on the surface (which is why exterior plastic products go grey over time).

To remove mould and algae, wash with a solution of one part bleach to two parts water, and leave for 20 minutes to work. Then rinse. If the blemish is stubborn, scrub with a stiff nylon bristle (not metallic) brush.

b. Cleaning and washing - Wash with hot water and liquid detergent every 6 months. Rinse with clean water. During this process it is advisable to inspect all components of the window for defects and take action if necessary.

c. Exuding natural resin - Wait until dried to a white crystalline resin before you attempt to remove it. If the resin is particularly stubborn, you may need to carefully use a scraper to remove surface deposits. Do not use a metal scraper as this will damage both the coating and the underlying timber substrate. Use a hot air paint stripper to soften the exuded natural resin and to draw as much as possible from the underlying timber. Do not overheat as this may damage the coating system. Remove with a lint-free cloth dampened by methylated spirits to clean any remaining resin residues from the timber surface. Apply a suitable base stain or primer to bare timber areas. Then bring forward these areas with one coat of finish, before applying a further coat of finish overall.

d. Damage - If any part of the window's coating system is damaged to the point of showing bare timber, contact the manufacturer to find out which is the appropriate coating material to use and their practical instructions on how to maintain it. If you do not know who manufactured the window, follow the re-decoration instructions that apply to your particular window section. See BWF TWAS Fact Card No 5.

Hardware

It is necessary to maintain all hardware regularly in order to ensure it works and lasts.

a. General - Wipe away all dirt and debris, especially on moving parts. Check all screws are tight.

b. Handles - Wipe clean with a damp cloth. Do not lubricate.

c. Window Locking System - Apply petroleum jelly to all locking bolts, guide slots (on frame) and striker plates.

d. Hinges - Add the minimum amount necessary of light machine oil to all pivots. Wipe away excess. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for pivot windows.

e. Ventilator and canopy - Wipe clean with a damp cloth. Clean away blockages. Do not lubricate.

BWF Accredited Timber Windows carry a guarantee of up to 10 years on their hardware.

Glazing unit

Check for any defects. Pay particular attention to looking for cracked glass, misting of the unit and shrinking of the glazing material. For cracking and misting, contact the window manufacturer (or glazier if the window was not supplied factory glazed). If the glazing material has shrunk and the glazing system has not failed, ensuring the window is completely dry, it may be possible to cap the original glazing material with silicon or polysulphide sealant. It may be more difficult to overcoat silicone sealants, especially if using water-based paint or stains. Although much slower to cure, polysulphide sealants can be overcoated much more successfully. If the glazing system has failed, then the glazing unit should be completely replaced.

Check that the weatherseals have not moved or been pulled out. If they have, simply push back into place. If torn, replace with new weatherseals of similar size and type.

Paint or stain on a weatherseal will cause it to become rigid, reducing its effectiveness. If the weatherseals have been over-coated, scrape off the coating material with a plastic scraper. Ensure that they return to their original shape and compress when the window is closed. If they do not return to their original shape, replace with new weatherseals of similar size and type. Any stubborn water-borne wood stains or paints may be removed by wiping down with a cloth dampened by methylated spirits.

Weatherseals

How often you need to do it

Repairs should be carried out as and when necessary in order to make the job easier when it comes to the planned maintenance and re-decoration. By carrying out these checks before the problem gets worse, and re-decorating in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, a quality timber window will last for a lifetime.

Hardware - Whenever necessary and at least once a year.

Other components - Whenever necessary and at least every 5 years.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the window manufacturer for further information regarding the maintenance requirements for your particular window. They may direct you to the manufacturer of the coating system or hardware if you have a particularly complicated query.

Every BWF Accredited Timber Window is supplied with care and maintenance instructions.

Note: Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of advice given, the Federation cannot accept liability for loss or damage arising from the use of the information supplied in this publication.

Contact BWF Accredited Manufacturers for fully factory finished timber windows

www.bwf.org.uk



British Woodworking Federation
55 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3QL
Tel: 0870 458 6939 Fax: 0870 458 6949
e-mail: windows@bwf.org.uk www.bwf.org.uk

