Doors and windows

Doors or windows don't open, close, or latch properly

Conditions that cause doors and windows to not open, close, or latch properly include, but are not limited to, improper or poor framing, damaged or loose hardware, excessive moisture, or structure settling in the affected area. If the structure is over ten years of age, additional short-term settling damage PROBABLY will not occur, and doors and windows can be trimmed, adjusted, or re-framed to allow for easy and proper opening and closing. However, areas should be noted and monitored for additional settling problems, especially during periods of high rainfall, and any additional damage should be evaluated by a licensed structural engineer. If you are unfamiliar with settling damage at doors and windows, you should seek the specialized services of a licensed structural engineer for further evaluation and information BEFORE CLOSE OF ESCROW.

Tempered safety glass

Glass walls, doors, and windows were verified as tempered safety glass where typically required or desired. While all glass breaks, tempered safety glass typically will shatter into hundreds or thousands of smaller, less dangerous pieces, whereas standard glass can shatter into large shards which can cause large cuts and wounds, and even pierce internal organs. In many cases, tempered safety glass will even hold together, allowing cleanup to be accomplished more easily.

I cannot verify tempered safety glass in doors and windows unless the safety seal is visible on the glass. Various regulations and standard building practices require that the safety seal be etched into the glass and visible.

Absence of tempered safety glass in sliding glass doors, certain other glass doors, and low windows creates a safety and personal injury hazard. Sliding glass doors typically are manufactured with tempered safety glass. However, tempered safety glass is expensive, and homeowners occasionally replace broken safety glass with regular glass without understanding the safety hazards inherent in doing so. I occasionally have found instances where the sellers removed high-quality safety-glass doors and replaced them with doors of lesser quality that did not include safety glass.

You should verify as tempered safety glass, or have tempered safety glass installed, any areas that were noted as not having safety glass at the time of the inspection. Additionally, you should take the time to verify that tempered safety glass is present where needed regardless of what was or was not noted in **Your Home Inspection Report.** It's that important.

Sliding glass door thresholds

Sliding glass doors have another problem besides people trying to walk through them. It is common for water to leak in through the thresholds. Many people think that slightly wet flooring at the sliding glass door is simply from people going in and out, either during rain or when going to and from the pool, backyard barbecue, etc. Any water leaking is a problem because it can stain carpets and promote rot in the subfloor, sometimes even rotting out the baseboards and lower sections of the wall. If the problem is not severe, additional caulking or flashing might abate the problem. If the problem continues, even after additional caulking or flashing, a drain pan can be fitted for the threshold. Unfortunately, this type of repair must be customized to fit specific doors, doorways, and thresholds. And any time you say the word "customized," you're typically talking a greater expense. Consult with a qualified door and window installation professional for additional information if you are having problems around your sliding glass doors.

Window coverings

Inspection, testing, analysis, or opinion of condition or function of interior window coverings (shutters, blinds, drapes, etc.) is not within the scope of the property inspection. Window coverings on windows can interfere with my visual observation and testing of the windows. While I do my best to see all areas around the windows, I do not remove window coverings to inspect the framing and the windows themselves, and I will not climb on furniture to get access to the windows. So if your property inspection report notes "excessive furnishings" , make sure you note those areas and check them out at your final walk-through.

Vinyl windows

Vinyl windows typically create a very tight seal that can be difficult to break to open windows, possibly causing damage. Such a seal can also prevent the structure from breathing properly, possibly causing a build-up of indoor air pollution and health problems for some individuals (See Indoor air quality in "The ASPEC Insider", located at the back of **Your Home Inspection Report.**) You should open vinyl windows regularly to prevent them from self-sealing.

Multi-pane windows

Multi-pane windows reduce street noise and improve heating and cooling efficiency. Since the space between the panes is sealed at the factory, multi-pane windows typically cannot be repaired and have to be replaced. Depending on the type of construction and the type of exterior siding, window replacement can be expensive. If a seal fails, air from the environment may enter the formerly sealed space, which may cause condensation or fogging in the window.

It is not always possible to detect failed seals in multi-pane windows because evidence of the failure may not be visible, particularly during dry weather, so I cannot ensure that each and every seal on each and every window is intact at the time of the inspection. Dirty windows also make it difficult to properly examine multi-pane windows. If windows are dirty, they should be cleaned, both inside and outside. Any apparent residue left on the window will usually be within the sealed space and typically indicates that the window seal has failed. If you can't determine whether or not the seal is broken, hold an ice cube against the glass for about a minute. If the seal is broken, moisture between the two glass panes will condense on the inside of the glass. You can also look at the windows during cold or wet weather, and any condensation that cannot be wiped away on the interior or exterior of the window is in the space between the panes, indicating that the seal has failed.

Due to the expense involved in replacing multi-pane windows, I recommend that you have all multi-pane doors and windows cleaned, inside and outside, before close of escrow and then checked to see if there are any failed seals that were not evident at the time of the inspection.

More on Windows…..

Windows come in a variety of shapes, sizes, designs and materials. Double hung, casement, awning and sliding windows open by different methods. Fixed windows let in light but can not be opened. Skylights can be fixed or they can be opened manually or by an electric motor. Windows can be made of wood, vinyl, steel, aluminum, vinyl-clad wood, aluminum-clad wood or vinyl-clad aluminum.

A typical window contains glass, framing around the glass called the sash, framing around the window opening and moulding around the frame. Windows may be a single pane of glass or may contain two or more layers of glass with air space between the layers for insulation. A coating on "low-E" glass reflects radiant heat back into your home during the winter and reflects heat from the sun's rays away from your home during the summer.

Inspection

Inspect your windows once each year. Begin by opening and closing the windows. If the windows stick, it may be that moisture is swelling wood windows. Allow the wood to dry during the summer, inspect for decay and re-seal. Sticking windows can also be caused by excessive layers of paint between the frame and sash. Use a putty knife or a "window zipper" to cut through the paint. Cleaning the window's track with a brush and lubricating the inside of the track with petroleum jelly or silicone spray can also solve window sticking problems.

Wood windows should be inspected inside and out for paint and decay problems in the same manner as wood siding and wood trim.

Maintenance

Clean the tracks on windows that open with a brush or vacuum attachment. Lubricate the inside of the track with petroleum jelly or silicone spray, removing any excess. Casement windows that operated by a crank and gear mechanism should be maintained by occasionally cleaning and lubricating the window mechanism.

Look for broken glass panes, bent sashes, loose, broken or missing hardware and torn or damaged window screens. Inspect locks and latch handles for proper operation and secure fit. Check seals, caulking and weather stripping to ensure cool outside air cannot enter your home from around a window. Make any necessary repairs.

A word on washing your windows. Few things affect the feeling of a room more than the quality of light coming through the windows. The easiest, fastest and most effective way to clean windows is with a squeegee and clear ammonia or dishwashing detergent and water. Use a professional quality window squeegee with replaceable blades. Use a squeegee extension pole to reach windows that are beyond reach. A squeegee scrub sleeve is the most efficient way to scrub the windows before squeegeeing.

Finally, check to make sure all opening windows move freely. You want to be certain that your family can exit through windows if necessary.

Other helpful websites

Deadbolt locks - http://www.typesoflocks.com/locking-up-tight-with-a-deadbolt.php