

# Window Inspection Checklist

When to replace vs when to maintain

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## 8 Signs That Mean You Need Replacement

### 1. Condensation between panes

The IGU seal has failed. The window is no longer insulating properly. Not fixable without replacing the glass unit.

### 2. Cold radiating from closed windows

Stand 6 inches from the glass. A column of cold air means thermal performance is gone.

### 3. Visible rot, warping, or cracked frames

Wood frames rot from the inside out. Vinyl cracks in extreme cold if the PVC is low quality.

### 4. Difficulty opening, closing, or locking

Hardware problems that can't be adjusted indicate the frame has shifted or warped. A safety concern.

### 5. Energy bills climbing year over year

If you've ruled out HVAC issues, window performance is often the culprit.

### 6. Outside noise noticeably louder

Failed seals reduce sound insulation along with thermal performance.

### 7. Daylight visible around the frame

A serious air leak. Check at night with a flashlight from outside while someone shines light inside.

### 8. Single-pane or pre-1990 windows

Older single-pane windows have essentially no thermal resistance. Replacement almost always pays off.

## 3 Signs That Look Bad But Don't Mean Replacement

### 1. Condensation on the interior glass surface

This is humidity in your home, not a failed window. Improve ventilation - install a bathroom fan, run your HRV, reduce humidifier output.

### 2. Paint or caulking peeling around the frame

Normal maintenance. Scrape, clean, recaulk, and repaint. Not a window failure.

### 3. Draft from one corner of one window

Usually just a weatherstripping issue. Replace the strip before assuming you need new windows. Cost: \$20 to \$60 DIY.

## 5-Step Window Self-Inspection

Step 1 - Candle test: Hold a lit candle or incense stick near the frame edges. Smoke deflecting means air infiltration.

Step 2 - Visual check: Look for visible cracks, rot, or discolouration in the frame, especially at corners.

Step 3 - Condensation check: Look between panes. Fog or moisture means the IGU seal has failed.

Step 4 - Lock test: Operate every lock and latch. Difficulty indicates the frame has shifted.

Step 5 - Frame check: Press gently on the frame corners. Any give or softness means rot or structural failure.

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