

If you've ever walked into a warm kitchen on a cold morning and noticed a cloudy halo trapped inside the window, you've met the classic symptom of a blown unit. Misted double glazing doesn't just spoil the view. It hints at wasted heat, damp in the frame, and a seal that has quietly failed. I've repaired more of these than I can count, and while the fix is sometimes simple, it pays to understand what's going on before you start spending money.

What “misted” actually means

Double glazed units are made of two panes of glass separated by a spacer bar. That cavity is sealed and filled at the factory, often with argon gas, then lined with a desiccant to keep the internal air dry. When the perimeter seal fails, outside moisture sneaks into that cavity and condenses against the inner faces of the panes. The result is a fog you cannot wipe away because it's sealed inside. On cold days it can bead into droplets, then fade slightly when the sun hits it. The cycle repeats, and over time you'll see mineral tracks and stains that never leave.

A misted unit signals two things: a compromised seal and a moisture problem in the cavity. The frames might still be sound, the hardware might still lock perfectly, and the glazing may not be structurally dangerous. But thermally, that window is underperforming, and left alone it can add to heating bills and mold risk around the reveals.

Why double glazing blows in the first place

I usually find a handful of recurring causes when called to assess misted double glazing. Some are avoidable, some aren't.

Manufacturing limits. Not all sealed units are created equal. Budget lines often use butyl or polysulfide primary seals with inconsistent application. If the spacer bar isn't perfectly aligned or the sealant has voids, water vapor will eventually find a path. You won't know this on day one. Problems show up a few years in, often just outside the warranty window.

Thermal movement. Glass and frames expand and contract. Dark-coloured frames can swing 30 to 50 degrees between summer sun and night air. Those movements stress the perimeter seal. Over thousands of cycles, the bond can fatigue, especially at corners.

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Poor drainage and blocked weep holes. uPVC and aluminum frames are designed with drainage routes for any water that gets into the glazing rebate. If installers forgot to clear the packers or fitted gaskets poorly, water sits against the edge of the unit. Constant wetting shortens the life of the seal.

Aggressive cleaning and films. I've seen units fail early after solvent-heavy cleaners or stick-on privacy films softened edge seals. It's not common, but it happens.



Incorrect glazing packers. The little plastic blocks that support the glass spread load away from the corners. If the packers are missing or in the wrong place, the unit can sag, twist, and stress the seal, especially in tall casements and door leaves.

Age. Even with the best components, seals age. UV, temperature swings, and time take their toll. A good unit can last 15 to 25 years, sometimes longer. Cheaper units can fail in five to ten.

How to tell if the unit is really blown

Not all foggy glass is a blown unit. Before you dive into Double Glazing Repairs, do a quick check.

First, try cleaning both sides of the pane. If the haze wipes off, you've got surface condensation or grime, not a seal failure. Surface condensation collects on the room side in cold weather if the air is humid. It collects on the outdoor face on clear summer mornings when the outside glass cools under the night sky. Both are normal, and neither requires a new unit.

Second, look for moisture inside the cavity. If there are beads, tracks, or a general milky bloom that never clears, that's internal condensation. Look hard at the edges and corners. You may also find damp dust stuck to frame gaskets.

Third, check the frame drainage. Open the sash and inspect the bottom of the frame. Weep holes should be clear. If water sloshes around inside the rebate, that's a problem, but it doesn't automatically mean the unit is blown. Clear the holes and monitor the window for a few days.

Fourth, hold a flame or bright torch by the pane and count reflections. You should see multiple ghost images, one from each face. If one looks distorted or there are odd smears inside, moisture has etched the inner surfaces.

Fifth, run your hand around the perimeter while it's windy. A draught around the frame points to gasket or hinge issues, not necessarily a blown unit, but it still hurts efficiency.

Can you fix blown double glazing, or is replacement the only option?

Homeowners often ask two versions of the same question: Can you Fix Blown Double Glazing without replacing the glass, and will it be any good? The short answers: sometimes and not always. There are three broad approaches.

Targeted repair of the sealed unit. Once the internal cavity is compromised, you cannot fully restore factory conditions. The desiccant is spent, the gas fill has escaped, and the bond is gone. Some companies offer on-site valve drilling to vent, dry, and reseal the unit. The method involves drilling small holes through one pane, flushing the cavity with dry air or alcohol, sometimes adding a drying agent, then plugging the holes with vents or clear caps. It reduces visible misting for a while, often months, sometimes a couple of years. It does not restore the original U-value, and if the internal coatings are etched, the marks remain. I rarely recommend this unless budget is tight and the unit is otherwise hard to source.

Complete sealed unit replacement. This is the reliable fix. Keep the existing frames and hardware, swap in a new double glazed unit made to the exact size, thickness, and spacer spec. The thermal performance returns, clarity is restored, and you get a new warranty on the glass. In most cases, this is the best balance of cost and longevity.

Full window replacement. If the frames are warped, rotten, or past their service life, replacing the entire window makes sense. Timber that's soft, uPVC that's chalky and brittle, aluminum with blown thermal breaks, or security issues can tip the decision. It costs more, but you get modern frames, better gaskets, and updated hardware.

My rule of thumb: if the frames are in decent shape and the sashes close squarely, replace the sealed unit. If there are multiple issues, step back and cost a full replacement for the opening. Quick fixes like drilling have their place as a stopgap, but I treat them as temporary.

What a proper unit replacement involves

A straightforward replacement is usually tidy and quick. On site, a good fitter will protect the floors, pop off the glazing beads, and note the original packer positions. After easing out the blown unit, they'll clear debris from the rebate, check drainage holes, and inspect gaskets for cracks or shrinkage. New packers are placed to support the glass properly at quarter points, with toe and heel packers in doors and large openers to prevent drop over time. The new unit goes in square, beads click back, and a final seal is applied if needed. The sash is checked for twist and closes against the weather seal evenly.

A typical window takes 20 to 40 minutes once the unit is on site. Large bays or awkward access need more time. If you have Georgian bars or leaded designs, make sure the new unit's pattern aligns with adjacent panes. A mismatch is obvious and annoying.



If you want to upgrade performance, this is the time. You can opt for low-E coatings, warm edge spacer bars, argon fill, or even step up to laminated inner panes for security and sound reduction. Those tweaks add a modest cost and can save heat over many winters.

Costs you can expect

Costs vary with region, access, glass spec, and size, but some ballpark figures help planning.

Small bathroom or hallway panes, say 400 by 600 mm, clear low-E, can run 60 to 100 pounds for the unit, plus fitting. Expect 100 to 180 pounds total if you're replacing one or two at a time.

Standard casement sizes around 900 by 1200 mm often land in the 120 to 200 pound range for the glass, then 60 to 120 pounds for fitting. A fair total is 180 to 320 pounds.

Large picture windows and sliders can reach 300 to 600 pounds for the unit, more if laminated or toughened, with labor on top. Heavy and high-risk lifts sometimes require two fitters and special handling.

Special glass types change the numbers. Toughened safety glass is required in critical zones like doors and low level glazing. It adds 20 to 40 percent. Laminated security glass adds more. Warm edge spacers or high-

performance coatings are usually marginal add-ons, not deal breakers.

If you call out a firm for a single pane across town, minimum charges apply. Bundling multiple units in one visit saves money per pane.

As for drilling and venting services, quotes vary widely. You might see 60 to 120 pounds per pane. If the unit is cheap to replace, it's hard to justify this route beyond a short-term cosmetic fix.

Full frame replacements swing much higher. A single uPVC casement window supplied and installed can range from 400 to 900 pounds, more for composite or aluminum. If your frames are good, it **Misted Window Repairs** rarely makes financial sense to replace them just to cure misting.

Energy and comfort implications

A failed seal doesn't always feel drafty, but you lose thermal efficiency. The gas fill is gone, and moisture inside conducts heat more readily. You'll see it on a thermal camera as a cooler patch. In busy family homes where cooking and showers push humidity up, internal condensation can appear more often on marginal units. It's not just glass performance at play. Trickle vents, extractor fans, and ventilation all matter.

If you're on the fence about upgrading glass spec, consider your room orientation and usage. South and west facing rooms gain solar heat. East and north rooms often feel chilly and benefit most from better U-values. Bedrooms also gain from laminated glass for acoustic control if you're near traffic.

DIY versus hiring a pro

Replacing sealed units looks easy on video. In practice, there are pitfalls. The most common DIY mistakes I see are scratched frames from lever tools, broken beads from prying in the wrong order, and poor packer placement that leads to a sash that binds or a door that drops. Measuring also trips people up. You must capture overall width and height, glass thickness, spacer thickness, and know the edge clearances of your frame system. A 4 mm error can mean a unit that rattles or simply won't fit.

That said, if you're handy, have the right suction cups, and understand glazing packers and toe-and-heel on openers, it's doable. You need to order the glass precisely, label bead positions as they come off, keep the rebate clean, and reseal the beads without bowing the frame. If you've never done it, start with a small fixed light rather than a door or a big opener.

For most homeowners, a local firm that specializes in Misted Double Glazing Repairs is the stress-free path. You get a guarantee, you don't spend your Saturday juggling glass, and if there's a problem like a warped sash, they can correct it on the spot.

Common extras that make a difference

Replacing a unit is a chance to tidy other issues that creep in over time.

Gaskets and seals. Rubber compresses and shrinks. If your window howls in a gale, ask for new gaskets. The cost is modest, and the difference is night and day.

Hinges and keeps. Friction hinges wear. If the sash scuffs the frame or won't seal at the top corner, new hinges can fix the geometry. Combine that with the fresh glass and you get back the quiet, firm close you had when the window was new.

Handle locking spindles. Wobbly handles and failed locking points invite drafts and weaken security. If the fitter is already there, replacing a handle or adjusting the keeps takes minutes.

Trickle vents. If you fight condensation on the room side in winter, consider adding or upgrading trickle vents for background ventilation. It prevents black mold in reveals and keeps the glass clearer on cold mornings.

How to choose a repair company

Experience and access to quality units matter more than a slick advert. A good installer measures twice, explains the specification clearly, and asks about safety glass where required. They'll show you spacer choices and low-E options without pushing unnecessary extras. They'll also talk about drainage and packer positions, which signals professional focus.

I like to see the following on a quote: size and type of each unit, glass makeup (for example, 4/20/4 low-E argon), spacer color, warm edge or not, safety rating if applicable, lead time, and warranty period. If you have Georgian bars or leading, ask for a drawing or confirm the bar pattern matches your existing layout. For multiple panes in a bay, make sure sightlines align.

Preventing misting in the future

You can't beat time, but you can stretch a unit's life.

Keep weep holes clear. A quick seasonal clean with a cotton bud or a thin cable tie keeps the drainage working. If you see water pooling inside the frame after a storm, the holes are blocked.

Avoid aggressive solvents and stick-on films near the edges. If you want privacy, use acid-etched or laminated decorative glass rather than after-market films that creep over the perimeter seal.

Manage indoor humidity. Use extractor fans, especially in bathrooms and kitchens. In winter, aim for indoor relative humidity around 40 to 50 percent. A small hygrometer costs little and tells the story.

Shade wisely. External shading for big south-facing windows limits extreme thermal swings. You'll reduce stress on seals and make the room more comfortable in heatwaves.

Choose quality when you replace. Warm edge spacers and reputable seal systems last longer. The extra cost per pane is small compared to another replacement a few years sooner.

Edge cases worth knowing

I see a few special situations that deserve a mention.

Leaded and Georgian units. Decorative bars, whether surface-applied or within the cavity, can trap more heat and expand differently. They look great but can nudge up failure rates if the original glazing was budget spec. When replacing, match the style and ask for robust sealant systems.

Historic or listed buildings. Retrofitting double glazing into original timber frames is delicate work. Slimline units with narrow cavities exist, but their seals are working harder in less space. Expect a shorter lifespan, and use a joiner who understands traditional glazing rebates and putties.

Coastal properties. Salt air is brutal. Aluminum spacers and exposed edge seals suffer. Warm edge composite spacers and careful sealing are worth it near the sea. Stainless fixings for beads and hardware are a must.

Rooflights and skylights. Heat and UV exposure are extreme. Use high-spec units and watch condensation lines. If you spot misting there, act early. Failed skylight units fog badly and drip onto plasterboard.

Large sliders and doors. Toe-and-heel is critical. If a heavy glazed door isn't braced with packers in the right places, it will drop, rub, and stress the seal. Get an installer who can show you how they pack and brace the leaf.

Realistic timelines and warranties

From the first phone call to a finished install, expect around one to two weeks if your unit spec is standard. Toughened or laminated glass adds days because it must be heat treated. Bespoke patterns or shaped panes push it to three or four weeks.

On the day, most homes see under two hours of disruption for a small set of units. The fitter will leave little mess beyond a few glass shards captured on a dust sheet. You can clean the panes straight away, but let any exterior sealant skin over before washing vigorously.

Warranties on replacement sealed units typically run five years, sometimes ten. Read the small print. Many exclude surface condensation complaints and require proof that drainage holes are kept clear. Keep your invoice and note the install date. If a unit mists within the warranty period, the firm should swap it out without fuss.

When a misted unit can wait, and when it can't

Not every foggy pane is an emergency. If the room is a spare bedroom and the misting is mild, you can plan the replacement for a convenient time. If the unit has visible water pooling inside the cavity, or if it's toughened glass in a door and you see chips near the edges, act sooner. Edge damage on toughened glass can propagate and cause spontaneous breakage. It's rare, but it's not a risk worth living with.

If you're about to sell the property, replacing the worst offenders is money well spent. Buyers notice clean, clear windows, and surveyors flag misted units as defects. You'll recover much of the cost in smoother negotiations.

Final take

Misted double glazing looks like a cosmetic issue, yet it sits at the crossroads of comfort, efficiency, and the long-term health of your frames. The technical truth is simple. Once the seal is gone, the unit's performance slides. You can dry and vent for a short-term patch, but a new sealed unit is the sensible cure in most cases. Choose a reputable installer, specify the glass with intent, and use the opportunity to fix small frame issues. With a few good decisions, you'll restore the view, cut heat loss, and push the next repair many years into the future.

For homeowners weighing Double Glazing Repairs, the question isn't only Can you Fix Blown Double Glazing, but what fix makes sense for your home, your budget, and your timeline. The best answer is practical: keep the frames if they're sound, upgrade the glass where it counts, and maintain the drainage and gaskets. Do that, and the mist will stay out of your windows and out of your plans.