What to Check When Securing Your Windows and Doors

Why a thorough check matters

Windows and doors are the most common entry points in any property, so their security is worth a close look. A quick visual check can reveal weak spots that are easy to overlook, while a more thorough assessment helps you decide whether an upgrade is needed. For homes fitted with durable aluminium windows, the frame itself is already a strong foundation, but the hardware and glass also play a big role. This checklist runs through the key points to inspect, with a short explanation of why each one matters.

Frame condition and alignment

Start by looking at the frame where it meets the wall. Any gap larger than a few millimetres can be a sign that the frame has shifted or that the original sealant has failed. Aluminium frames are rigid, but settlement of the building or poor initial fitting can throw them out of square. A frame that is not sitting true will mean the sash cannot close evenly, leaving small gaps that a tool can be slipped into. Check for any visible distortion by running a straight edge along the frame, and look for cracks in the sealant around the perimeter. If you find gaps, they may need to be filled or the frame may need to be re-fixed by a professional.

Glass type and condition

The glass itself is a crucial barrier. Standard float glass is relatively easy to break, so many modern installations use either toughened glass or laminated glass. Toughened glass is heat-treated so that it shatters into small, blunt pieces rather than sharp shards, but it can still be broken with a sharp blow. Laminated glass has a plastic interlayer that holds the glass together even when cracked, making it much harder to force through. Check whether your glass carries a marking, such as a British Standard kite mark or a label that indicates its type. If you are not sure, a glazier can confirm. Also look for any chips or cracks, as even small damage can weaken the panel and make it easier to break.



Multi point locking systems

A single lock point on a door or window is a relatively weak point. Multi point lock systems engage several bolts along the edge of the sash when the handle is turned, spreading the force across the frame. This makes it much harder to lever the door or window open. Check that all the locking points are engaging fully. On a door, that usually means looking at the top and bottom bolts as well as the central latch. On a window, it means checking that the espagnolette bolts shoot into the keepers on the frame. If any bolt is not reaching its keeper, the locking mechanism may need adjustment, a job that a locksmith can handle quickly.

Locking cylinder quality and key control

The locking cylinder is the part that accepts the key. A standard euro cylinder can be vulnerable to snapping or to bumping, where a specially shaped key is used to force the pins. Higher security cylinders have anti-bump and anti-snap features, such as a sacrificial line that breaks before the main mechanism is exposed. Check the cylinder face for any signs of damage or tampering. If your key is a basic profile, it is worth considering an upgrade to a cylinder that meets British Standard or Sold Secure certification. Also think about key control: if you have

lost a key or if the property has had previous occupants, a replacement cylinder is a simple way to restore security.

Door hardware and hinges

The hardware on a door includes the handle, the letterbox, and the hinges. A flimsy handle can be snapped off, and a letterbox can be used to reach inside and manipulate the lock if it is too close. Check that the handle is securely fixed and that the escutcheon plate is not loose. For hinges, look for hinge bolts or hinge screws that are visible when the door is closed. If the hinge pins are accessible from the outside, the door can be lifted off its hinges. Security hinges with fixed studs or concealed fixing points prevent this. If your door has standard hinges, check that the screws are in good condition and that the hinge itself is not rusted or showing signs of wear.

Weather seals and draught proofing

Weather seals are not just about comfort and energy efficiency; they also contribute to security. A good seal makes it harder for anyone to slide a tool between the door or window and the frame. Over time, rubber seals can become brittle or compressed, especially on south-facing elevations that get a lot of sun. Check the seals all the way around the opening. If they are cracked or missing, replace them. For sliding doors or windows, the seal at the meeting point of the two panels is especially important, as it is a common gap. A simple way to test is to close the door or window on a piece of paper: if the paper pulls out easily, the seal is not tight enough.



Powder coating and surface condition

The finish on aluminium frames is not just about looks. A good powder coating protects the aluminium from corrosion and from the elements. If the coating is chipped or peeling, moisture can get in and start to corrode the metal, which can weaken the frame over time. Check the edges of the frame, the corners, and any areas where the coating might have been scratched during installation. Small chips can be touched up, but large areas of damage may need a recoating. For homes that want low maintenance frames for busy homes, a well-maintained powder coating means the frames stay looking good and structurally sound for years with minimal effort.

Accessories and additional security

Beyond the main components, a few extras can make a real difference. A door viewer or a wide-angle peephole lets you see who is outside without opening the door. A door chain or a limiter gives you a chance to talk before you let someone in. For windows, a restrictor can limit how far the window opens, which is also useful for safety if there are children in the home. Check that any additional hardware is properly fixed and that it does not interfere with normal operation. If you have a patio door, a patio door lock or a security bar can prevent the door from being lifted off its track.

A regular maintenance cycle

Security is not a one-time check. A maintenance cycle that includes a quick visual inspection every few months will catch small problems before they become big ones. Lubricate the moving parts of the lock and the hinges with a dry lubricant, and clean the frames with a soft cloth and mild detergent. For anyone who wants low maintenance frames for busy homes, aluminium is a good choice because it does not rot, warp, or need painting. But the hardware and the seals still need attention. A simple schedule, such as checking the locks and seals in spring and autumn, is enough to keep everything working as it should.



When to call a professional

If you find any issue that you cannot fix yourself, a qualified locksmith or a window and door specialist can advise. This is especially true for anything involving the locking mechanism, the alignment of the frame, or the replacement of glass. Do not try to adjust a multi point lock without knowing what you are doing, as the wrong adjustment can stop the lock from engaging at all. Similarly, if you suspect that the frame has moved or that the sealant has failed, a professional survey will give you a clear picture of what needs to be done. A small investment in a check-up now can save a much larger repair later.