

Walk into any showroom or scroll through three installers' websites and you will see the same confident promises about double glazing: warmer rooms, quieter nights, lower bills. The product is good, no argument there, but the quiet linchpin holding your investment together is the warranty. When a sash sticks on a wet winter morning or a pane mists up two summers in, it is the warranty that decides whether you get a quick remedy or a slow headache. I have sat at kitchen tables with homeowners, reading through certificates while steam rises from mugs and frustration rises from quotes. Most problems are solvable, but the route depends almost entirely on what the warranty really says.

This guide walks through the terms that matter, with plain language and examples taken from real jobs. I will cover how long coverage typically lasts, what counts as a defect, what voids claims, and the grey areas that catch people out. I will also answer the two questions that fuel half the calls I get: can you fix blown double glazing, and what do misted double glazing repairs involve under warranty?

Where warranties usually start, and why paperwork matters

The clock normally starts on the date of installation, not the date you paid the deposit or the day the frames arrived on site. Some installers begin coverage from the date on the invoice or completion certificate, so keep those documents together with the warranty booklet and any product labels. If you are selling your home, your buyer's solicitor may ask for the warranty certificate and proof the installer was registered with a body like FENSA, Certass, or ASSURE at the time.

Paperwork is not just formal tidiness. When you make a claim, the service team will want details like the order number, the window location, and any glass unit stamps. That small acid-etched code on the spacer can identify the original sealed unit manufacturer, which can speed up a replacement by weeks. I have salvaged more than one slow claim by emailing a crisp photo of the unit code.

The layers of a double glazing warranty

A typical double glazing installation has three distinct layers with different terms: the sealed glass units, the moving hardware, and the frames plus installation workmanship. They do not all carry the same length of coverage.

Sealed units are usually covered for 5 to 10 years against failure of the hermetic seal, which is the invisible bond around the perimeter that keeps the spacer cavity airtight and moisture free. Some premium manufacturers offer 15 or even 20 years on premium units, especially if the glass has warm-edge spacers and was made in-house by the installer. The key phrase to look for is failure of the sealed unit resulting in moisture or dust ingress between the panes. If you can wipe away the mist with a cloth, it is on the room side and not a failed unit. True failure shows as condensation or streaks trapped inside the glass sandwich.

Hardware typically carries shorter terms. Expect 1 to 5 years on handles, hinges, locking mechanisms, and restrictors. These parts do the heavy lifting and are sensitive to wear and misuse. You might see extended hardware coverage if the system uses branded components from companies like Yale or Maco, but check whether the branded warranty needs separate registration.

Frames and finish have their own timetable. uPVC frames often have a 10-year guarantee against splitting, warping, or excessive discoloration. Laminated foils and coloured profiles can have shorter terms for surface defects. For aluminium, powder-coated finishes often carry 10 to 25 years against significant color fade or blistering, with coastal properties sometimes excluded or downgraded unless a marine-grade finish was specified.

Timber windows rely on correct finishing and maintenance. I have seen 30-year frame guarantees on engineered timber, but the fine print required periodic repainting and proof of care.

Installation workmanship is usually guaranteed by the installer for 1 to 10 years. This covers how well the frames were fitted, sealed to the brickwork, and packed for alignment. Workmanship terms underpin many leak and draught claims. If the sealant joint fails in the first winter, you will be leaning on workmanship coverage, not the frame manufacturer.

What “blown” and “misted” actually mean

Homeowners tend to use blown and misted interchangeably. Installers tend to be pickier. From a technician’s standpoint, a blown double glazed unit is one where the perimeter seal is compromised, and the argon or dry air inside has exchanged with ambient air. That shift brings moisture into the cavity. Once temperature drops, the moisture condenses on the inside faces and you see mist that you cannot wipe off. Dust or cloudy deposits can also settle, especially after repeated cycles.

If the mist is on the room or outside surface, the unit itself is not blown. That is normal condensation from humidity, especially in kitchens and bathrooms or on cold mornings. Frames that are too snug on the edges or trickle vents that are shut all winter can make this worse. Warranties do not cover surface condensation, because that is a building physics issue, not a product defect.

So, can you fix blown double glazing? If we mean fix the seal itself in situ, no, not in any lasting way. The perimeter seal is baked into the unit under factory conditions. Some services drill pinholes, inject drying agents, then fit tiny vents. That can clear the look for a time, and I have seen it buy a few years in low-priority rooms. But it removes the original sealed environment and almost always voids manufacturer coverage. When you have an active warranty, the correct remedy is replacement of the sealed unit, not repair. Out of warranty, the cost to replace a failed unit is typically a few hundred pounds for a standard-size pane, more for large or shaped glass, and usually far less than replacing the entire window.

Misted double glazing repairs within warranty are straightforward when the evidence is clear. The installer orders a like-for-like unit, including any special coatings, patterns, or toughening marks, and swaps it in. The visit is quick, often 30 to 60 minutes per pane once the new unit arrives. The lead time varies with glass availability, from a few days to several weeks during busy periods or for unusual sizes.

The exclusions nobody reads until it matters

All warranties have exclusions. The common ones make sense, but some are easy to stumble into.

Improper use covers things like forcing a handle when the gearbox is engaged, hanging heavy blinds from the sash, or prying a sash against a swollen frame. If a child swings from a handle and the spindle bends, that is not a defect. I have replaced plenty of broken handles as goodwill, but legally the installer does not have to.

Environmental conditions often exclude damage from external factors. Living within a few miles of the coast can shorten finish warranties unless the product was ordered with marine-grade coating. Brick dust during building work can pit frames and glass if not covered, and that is not a product fault. Sealants do not like constant standing water. If a sill lacks fall and water pools, long-term staining or algae is usually excluded.



Third-party alterations can void coverage. Drilling through frames for cable runs, installing shutter fixings into sash members, or retrofitting aftermarket security devices can compromise drainage paths or warp the frame. The polite version is that the original design was changed. If you want to add blinds within the glazing bead or surface-mounted security contacts, ask the installer first. They may supply approved parts and keep the warranty intact.

Normal wear and tear appears in every policy. Rubber gaskets compress slightly over the first year. Hinges and scissor stays may need a dab of lubricant annually. Weatherseals discolor over time. None of this is treated as a failure.

Condensation on external surfaces is another gotcha. High performance low-E units can develop morning dew on the outside face because the inner heat stays in the room instead of warming the outer pane. Ironically, that is a sign the unit is doing its job. No warranty covers that, nor should it.

What “lifetime” really means in glazing

Lifetime does not always mean your lifetime. In this trade, it often means the product’s expected service life or the period the original purchaser owns the property. Some policies use phrases like lifetime of the installation, which can be set at 20 or 25 years in the small print. Others mean lifetime of component availability. Ask the installer to translate any lifetime language into a number and a condition. If you intend to sell the property, ask about transferability. Many warranties transfer once to a new owner within a set window, sometimes with a small admin fee.

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How to make a warranty claim without the runaround

Most delays happen because the first call or email is too vague. Give the installer or manufacturer what they need in the first exchange. Clear photos help: one of the whole window to identify type and handedness, one of the

fault close up, and one of any etched marks on the glass edge. If the fault is intermittent, like a stiff hinge that binds when it is hot, note the conditions. Include your original contract number or the date of install if you have it.



Expect a triage step. Many firms will send a service tech to confirm the diagnosis, especially for sealed units where the cost of a remake is significant. If it is a made-to-measure pane, the tech will likely take precise measurements and glass specifications. This visit is usually free under warranty. For out-of-warranty visits, there may be a call-out fee that is deducted if you proceed with repairs.

Once the unit is ordered, normal lead time ranges from 7 to 21 days for standard units. Add time for special laminates, integral blinds, or shaped panes. The replacement appointment itself is quick. A competent fitter will remove the glazing beads, lift out the failed unit, clean the platform, insert new packers as needed, drop in the new unit, and re-bead. On uPVC frames, this is rarely a messy job. On timber, expect careful resealing.

When sealed unit failure blurs into workmanship

Not every misted unit is an unlucky seal. I have seen newly installed windows that fog in the first year because the glazing platform was not flat, the packers were misplaced, or the frame had a twist. That stress can shorten a unit's life. If you see a pattern of multiple units failing on a new install, ask the installer to review the beading method, packer placement, and frame squareness. Many ethical firms will treat a cluster of early failures as a workmanship issue and not just replace the glass, but correct the underlying setup.

On the flip side, a fifteen-year-old unit that fails in a sunny south-facing room is probably just at the end of its service life. UV exposure and thermal cycling work the seals over time. No installer can warranty against time indefinitely.



Can you fix blown double glazing without replacing the glass?

If you are outside of warranty and weighing options, there are three broad paths.

Replace the sealed unit like-for-like. This gives you back the original thermal performance, keeps trickle vents and drainage working as designed, and preserves the look. If energy costs matter, this is the only route that makes sense. Units with low-E coatings and argon fill are standard now, so you may even get a slight performance bump compared to an older pane. In most homes I manage, this is the default remedy. On a terraced house in Leeds, we replaced six failed units in one go for less than a single new window would have cost, and the rooms felt instantly warmer.

Attempt a defog service. Some companies drill small holes, flush the cavity with dry air, and install micro vents. It can clear the visual fog and is cheaper than a new unit. The trade-off is reduced insulation, risk to the long-term clarity, and the end of any remaining warranty. I treat this as a stopgap for rarely used rooms or when a house sale is imminent and the buyer is satisfied. It is not a repair in the strict sense.

Live with the fog. In utility spaces or garages, you may decide to do nothing. The glass is still structurally sound. The downsides are appearance and a small but real drop in insulation. If the unit is large, the weight can be an issue during replacement, but modern handlers have the gear to manage it.

What counts as a defect in frames and hardware

Window and door frames rarely fail catastrophically. The issues I see are usually functional or cosmetic and sit on a spectrum from “warranty must” to “fair wear and tear.”

Sticking sashes often trace back to thermal expansion on hot days, especially on dark uPVC foils. A millimetre of adjustment on the keeps or a tweak to the hinge compression cures it. Most installers treat this as a courtesy within the first year and then as chargeable maintenance.

Discoloration on uPVC should be subtle over a decade. If the white has turned noticeably creamy or yellow in a few years, that can be a claim. Before you push it, clean the frames with the manufacturer’s recommended cleaner. External pollutants and tobacco smoke can create a film that looks like fade.

Aluminium powder coat chalking happens slowly. If you can rub a finger and see a light chalky residue in under five years, ask the manufacturer to test the finish. Beware of pressure washing too close, which can damage the

coating and hand the manufacturer an easy refusal.

Timber movement is natural. Small hairline cracks in paint at joints are not faults. Bigger splits that let water into end grain may be. Timber warranties nearly always require regular maintenance. If you cannot show that you repainted at reasonable intervals or used the recommended system, your claim may falter.

Hardware pitting is common near coasts. Most stainless hardware resists it, but not forever. Some warranties exclude coastal pitting unless marine-grade hardware was specified. The distance that counts as coastal varies by policy, usually between 5 and 10 miles from the shore.

The tricky relationship between building movement and warranties

Older properties move. New lintels settle. If a frame goes out of square because the surrounding structure shifted, you may get draughts or binding. Most warranties exclude structural movement for good reason, but a skilled installer can often improve function with repacking and adjustments. Where a bay window dips slightly after a heavy roof load or a knocking hinge shows up after a new extension, patience and fine-tuning often solve the problem. Expect to pay for this work if the installer is blameless.

Security and glass specifications under warranty

If your windows were sold with security claims, the warranty may reference standards like PAS 24 or Secured by Design. Those standards do not guarantee the window is unbreakable, only that it meets certain tests. After a burglary, some homeowners ask the installer to replace broken glass under warranty. Breakage due to impact is almost always excluded, whether accidental or criminal. Insurance, not the window warranty, is the route for smashed panes.

On safety glass, look for the BS EN 12150 (toughened) or 14449/12543 (laminated) marks on the corner. If a bathroom window that should have been toughened was supplied in ordinary annealed glass and breaks under normal use, that is a valid defect. Documentation and stamps matter here.

Energy performance guarantees and the reality behind them

Marketing sometimes promises percentages on energy savings. Real performance depends on the whole building, not the glass alone. Most warranties avoid tying themselves to bill reductions. What they will warrant is the specification of the unit: the U-value, the presence of low-E coatings, gas fill rates within certain tolerances, and spacer type. If you suspect the wrong spec was fitted, a field test with a low-E detector and spacer inspection can confirm. Gas fill can be lab tested, but that is rare in practice. A reputable installer who has made a spec error will usually refit the correct units without fuss.

Preventive care that keeps you squarely in-bounds

A little maintenance goes a long way with both performance and goodwill on future claims. Once a year, wash the frames with mild soapy water, not solvent cleaners. Wipe the gaskets. Clear the drainage slots at the bottom of frames with a cotton bud. Lubricate moving parts sparingly with a silicone spray on seals and a light machine oil on metal mechanisms. Keep trickle vents free of dust. Record the date in your phone or a home maintenance log. If you ever end up debating a warranty refusal over neglect, having a simple log helps.

If a sash starts to scrape or a handle feels loose, do not force it. A simple adjustment now avoids a broken gearbox later. Most installers will give advice over the phone or email, especially if you send a short video of the problem.

Misted double glazing repairs under different scenarios

A tale from two houses shows how policy details shape outcomes. In one semi-detached, the front bay had three panes mist up within four years. The installer inspected and found packers missing on two sashes, which put uneven load on the units. They treated the whole bay as a workmanship claim, re-glazed all three panes, repacked correctly, and extended the unit warranty in writing for those positions by another five years. No charge to the owner, and the bay has stayed clear since.

Across town, a rental with uPVC casements saw one upstairs pane mist up after eight years. The sealed unit coverage was 10 years, but the tenant had drilled into the sash to fit a roller blind bracket. The screw penetrated the glazing bead and clipped the spacer, not deeply, but enough that the manufacturer could argue third-party damage. The installer chose to split the difference, supplying the new unit at cost while charging the landlord for labor. The lesson was simple: never drill into moving sashes. Use the wall or approved fixings on the frame where permitted.

Transferability and what happens when companies vanish

A solid installer warranty is good, but businesses merge, rebrand, or close. In the UK, FENSA registrations cover compliance, not product warranties, but you can ask whether your installer provided insurance-backed guarantees at the time of installation. These third-party policies can honour claims if the original firm ceases trading. The terms are often narrower and may not cover everything, but they are much better than nothing.

When buying a home with recent windows, ask for the original certificates and any insurance-backed paperwork. If the warranty is transferable, follow the steps quickly after completion. There is usually a window of 28 to 90 days to register the transfer.

Small print that signals a better warranty

Not all promises are equal. A few phrases in the booklet tell you a lot about how the company handles defects.

Clearly defined remedy. Look for language that states repair or replacement of defective parts at no cost, including labor. If it only mentions supply of parts, you may be paying for fitting.

No excessive proof burdens. Reasonable evidence requests are normal, but demands that are hard to meet years later, like original packaging or unused product labels, signal trouble.

Proportionate approach to cosmetic defects. Some firms exclude all cosmetic issues outright. Better ones allow for correction of significant cosmetic defects visible from a specified viewing distance, often 1.5 to 3 meters in natural light.

Fair call-out rules. A modest call-out charge that is waived if the fault is covered is fine. Punitive fees discourage claims and suggest a defensive posture.

Explicit coastal and maintenance guidance. Clear guidance means clear expectations. Vague exclusions turn into arguments later.

Straight answers to the most common questions

Can you fix blown double glazing? In warranty, the [Double Glazing Repairs](#) fix is replacement of the sealed unit, and it is the correct solution. Out of warranty, replacement remains the best long-term answer. Defogging services can improve appearance temporarily but sacrifice performance and coverage.

What do misted double glazing repairs involve? Diagnosis to confirm the mist is inside the cavity. Measurement and ordering of a new unit with matching spec. A short site visit to swap the pane. If misting is widespread or early in the product's life, an installer should also check packing and frame alignment.

Are small scratches or marks covered? Minor surface marks that are only visible in certain light are usually excluded. There are viewing standards for glass that define acceptable blemishes. If you have a deep scratch from day one that is visible in normal viewing, report it immediately. Cosmetic claims are strongest within the first weeks.

What if my handle or hinge fails after a few years? Hardware often has shorter coverage. If it fails within that window, ask for a direct replacement. If out of term, many installers carry spare parts and will replace at a sensible price. Some brands allow direct ordering by homeowners.

Do I void my warranty by cleaning with the wrong product? Solvents can damage uPVC and powder coatings. If discolouration or softening occurs after solvent use, you will have an uphill battle. Stick to mild soap and water, and the approved cleaners listed by the manufacturer.

A practical way to decide your next step

If you are staring at a foggy pane or a stubborn sash today, take a quick, organized approach.

- Check your paperwork for the installation date, installer details, and any certificate numbers. Note whether the warranty is with the installer, the manufacturer, or both.
- Photograph the fault clearly, including any glass stamps and the whole window for context. Try to capture whether the mist is inside the cavity.
- Contact the installer first. Provide the photos, describe the symptoms, and ask for their diagnosis and process. If they are no longer trading, check for insurance-backed guarantees or contact the glass unit manufacturer if identified.
- Avoid DIY interventions that could complicate the claim, such as drilling glass, removing beads, or using solvents. Keep the fault as original as possible until inspected.
- If out of warranty, get two quotes for sealed unit replacement. Ask both firms to confirm the glass spec, including low-E coatings, gas fill, and spacer type, to preserve performance.

Good double glazing should disappear into the background of your life, quietly doing its job. When it draws attention to itself, warranties and straightforward repairs put it back in place. Read the terms once, file them well, and you will save time later. And if you are still wondering whether a misted pane means the whole window is done for, take it from the jobs I have managed over the years: almost always, a simple sealed unit swap restores clarity, warmth, and comfort without fuss.