

the sash window man



Factsheet - Refurbishing box sash windows

The Sash Window Man operates under a repair and restore philosophy which means we always endeavour to fix your existing windows rather than install new ones.

We've produced this factsheet to help explain exactly how we refurbish your windows and to let you know what is and what is not included in the price on your quotation.



"The system that we use is unobtrusive but very effective."

Draught-Proofing

Usually when we refurbish an existing box sash window we take the opportunity to incorporate a draught-proof system at the same time. The system that we use is unobtrusive but very effective. The draught-proofing will not detract from the look of your window and has several advantages:

- Draughts are considerably reduced
- Outside noise is minimised
- The windows glide more easily (less friction)
- Rattles are eliminated

Draught-proofing box sash windows can never be totally effective but it is a cost effective way of reducing draughts and noise.

Your quotation will state clearly whether draught-proofing is included. Some people ask for two quotations showing the costs with and without draught-proofing. If you are undecided then we would urge you to have the draught-proofing installed, as the additional cost is relatively small compared to the great gain in terms of personal comfort and energy savings.



"...box sash windows ventilate a room most efficiently when both top and bottom sashes are open at the same time."

Don't seal your sashes!

A useful fact that many people are unaware of is that box sash windows ventilate a room most efficiently when both top and bottom sashes are open at the same time. When both sashes are open the hot air goes out of the top and cool air is sucked in through the bottom. This is why it is not a good idea to seal your top sashes permanently shut and just rely on opening the bottom sash.

Consideration for your home and possessions

Working on old windows can be a messy business and with the windows out it is important to consider that the wind can blow things over. We work with dust sheets and vacuum cleaners but it would help if you could prepare for us by taking the following simple steps:

- Carefully pack away any breakables that could be blown over
- Remove curtains and blinds from the window to be worked on
- Clear an area in front of the window (approximately 6 feet is ideal for working purposes)
- Cover your hi-fi and television if you have to leave them close to the window

How we repair your sash windows

Removing the sashes

The first thing that we do is remove the sashes. Some people mistakenly call the ropes "sashes". The sashes are the parts of the window that hold the glass and move up and down. There is a top sash and a bottom sash and in order to work on the window these sashes have to be removed. To do this the staff bead and the parting bead are removed. The beads are the small strips of wood that run from top to bottom and create the track that the sashes run up and down in.

Checking the sashes

Very often the joints on the sashes may have become loose. If this is the case we tighten them up. This can involve cutting and fitting new wedges. If the glass is broken or cracked we replace it. (Very often there are minor cracks in the corner of the glass that have been there for years – we do not replace the glass in this situation unless you have specifically asked for it to be done.) Often it is necessary to burn off excess paint, particularly on top sashes. Over the years layer after layer of paint has been applied which does not really do a lot to protect the timber and only serves to make the sash too big to slide up and down. If there is any putty missing new putty is added to ensure the glass is correctly fixed. If we are anticipating changing a pane of glass it will be clearly indicated on your quotation.

Checking the sills

The sill is checked for soft or rotten areas. These are cut out and replaced. Usually only a part of a sill is rotten. If it is a very small area it is cut out back to solid timber and filled with quality two part filler. If it is the front of the sill then we may cut it back level with where the outside of the bottom sash sits and then glue and screw a new nosing on. If it is necessary we will replace the entire sill.



"...If the glass is broken or cracked we replace it."



"...The sill is checked for soft or rotten areas."

Checking the boxes

If there is rot in the sill there is often rot in the bottom of the box where it meets the sill. The box is the area behind the pulleys. As its name suggests it is just a hollow box. It contains the weights that are attached to the sash by means of the sash cord. Any rot found in the box is cut out and new timber is used to make a repair. It is also often necessary to remove excess paint from the box to allow the sashes to run freely.

Checking the weights

It is not uncommon to find that the weights inside the boxes are wrong for the windows. This can cause the windows to run unevenly or to slide when opened. Sometimes heavier glass has been fitted or somebody has "borrowed" a weight when working on the house in the past. In order for the windows to be counter-balanced correctly the weight attached to each sash should match that of the window. We make sure that it does.

Checking the pulleys

The pulleys are oiled. If they do not operate smoothly then they are replaced with new ones.

New ropes

We always fit new ropes when refurbishing a window. It is important to make sure that when the window is redecorated that the ropes are not painted as this can make them brittle and prone to snapping. A good tip when redecorating around ropes is to coat them with Vaseline first. It will prevent any paint getting on to them, won't harm the rope and will wipe off easily once you have finished decorating.

Draught-proof the meeting rail

A draught-proof brush pile is cut and fixed into the back of the meeting rail on the bottom sash using a router. This helps to prevent rattling and stops unwanted draughts blowing through the centre of the window.

Re-fit the sashes

The sashes are checked to make sure they will slide up and down correctly. If they do then they are attached to the new ropes.

Re-fit the beads

We mentioned at the beginning that the timber staff beads and parting beads had to be removed in order to allow work on the windows. These beads are thrown away and replaced with new. The new beads are made of timber to the same profile as the original beads. They look exactly the same. The only difference is that if you are having your windows draught-proofed then the beads carry a brush pile that is set into them and sits between the sashes and the beads. We usually fit beads with a white brush pile to blend with the existing paintwork. If you have stripped the paintwork back to the natural timber we can use a brown brush pile if you prefer.

Window furniture

We generally only replace catches that are broken and if we are anticipating fitting new catches for you this will be clearly indicated on your quotation. However, if your window furniture is tatty you may wish to consider replacing it. To fit new brass or chrome centre catches, sash lifts on the bottom sash and D handles on the top sash is not expensive and will totally transform the look of the window. Ladies in particular find that the D handles on the top sash are particularly helpful, especially as they are usually the only ones who bother to clean the windows!



"...we always fit new ropes when refurbishing a window."



"New and newly restored sash windows need to be decorated with good quality paint..."

Contact us

Call us today for a chat about your sash windows and arrange for a free, no obligation survey and quote.

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Security

If you are concerned about the security of any of your sash windows we are able to fit a range of attractive fittings that will provide additional protection. We particularly like the acorn fittings that fit into the side of the top sash. They are visible, so act as a deterrent to the chance burglar who will, hopefully, move on and choose an easier target. They are easily removed with a key and allow full opening. They will also securely lock the window open just enough to provide ventilation, but not enough to allow an intruder access, your children to climb out or your pets to escape.

Making New Sashes

If it is obvious that some of your sashes are beyond repair then these will be detailed on your quote and the cost of making, priming, glazing and fitting them will have been included. We will provide you with an additional fact-sheet which explains how we make the sashes. It is not always possible to tell if a sash is beyond economic repair until we begin to work on the windows. This is not something that happens very often, but if additional sashes need to be made there may be some extra cost. If such a situation should arise we would obviously speak to you first before incurring any extra cost for you.

Decoration

New and newly restored sash windows need to be decorated with good quality paint if they are to last and function for a long period of time. We start the process properly by ensuring that all of the sashes we make are finished in our workshops with a high quality microporous paint system.

It is important that once we have finished our installation work, either you or your decorator completes the decoration of the windows within 2 months. This ensures that the windows are kept at their best and minimises the chances of moisture getting into the wood. If you do not know a local decorator we will be happy to recommend one to you.

Guarantees

It is not easy to provide a worthwhile guarantee when refurbishing old windows. However, we do try to give a fair and honest service and a lot of our work comes as a result of repeat business from previous customers. We have a great number of satisfied customers who are willing to act as a reference, talk to prospective customers and show work in their homes that we have completed. We are always happy to help with any queries you may have after we have finished work on your windows.

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