FITTING GUIDE · BIFOLD DOORS

How to Install Aluminium Bifold Doors

Buying your bifold doors supply-only can save a lot of money, but the fitting has to be right for them to run smoothly for years. This guide explains how SOVU aluminium bifold doors go in, from checking the opening to the final adjustments, so you or your builder know exactly what to expect.

It applies to bifold doors delivered fully assembled. If you ordered your doors flat-packed, start with our flat-pack build guide, then come back here.

Before you start: doors and large glazed units are heavy, and fitting them involves working at the structure of your home. These guides are written so you know what a good installation looks like. If you are not confident, use a competent builder or installer. Replacement doors and windows in England and Wales must meet Building Regulations, which is usually shown by using a FENSA or CERTASS registered installer or by notifying your local building control.

What you will need

- A drill or SDS hammer drill and a set of HSS bits
- Frame fixings suited to your wall (concrete screws or plugged screws)
- Frame packers and glazing packers in mixed thicknesses
- A long spirit level or laser level, a string line, a tape measure and a set square
- Allen keys (2.5mm, 3mm and 4mm), a Pozi No.2 screwdriver and a rubber or nylon mallet
- Low modulus silicone and a sealant gun
- Glass suckers (vacuum cups), a glazing paddle and gloves
- At least two people for lifting the frame and the glass

1. Check the opening

The opening needs to be sound, level, plumb and square, with a lintel carrying the load above. The new frame must never take any weight from the building. Clean the opening, remove old sealant and brush down the threshold area.

Check the reveals inside and out so that plaster, tiles or skirting will not stop the panels folding back fully. If the opening is not level, sort that out now – a bifold that is fitted out of level will drag and catch on the track.

2. Fit the sub-cill (if you ordered one)

If your doors come with a separate sub-cill, it should overhang the outside face of the wall by at least 25mm so rain drips clear. Seal the ends of the cill with low modulus silicone and fit the end caps.

Sit the cill on packers, check it is perfectly level along its length, then fix it down through the thermal break around 150mm from each end and at roughly 500mm centres. Put a dab of silicone in each fixing hole before the screw goes in so water cannot follow the fixing. If your doors have an integrated threshold, skip this step.

3. Set the frame in the opening

Lift the frame into the opening. Unless you ordered your doors flat-packed, the panels will already be hung – open them and stack them to one side so you can reach the fixing points.

Pack the frame so it sits plumb, level and square, then fix it through the jambs and head with fixings about 150mm in from each corner and no more than 500mm apart. Put packers behind every fixing so tightening the

Seal around the outside of the frame with low modulus silicone, and run a bead along the cill rebate and the cill ends. If you chose a low threshold with a rebate, bond the rebate to the threshold with silicone and screw it in place.

4. Test the drainage

Clean any debris from the bottom track. Before glazing, slowly pour a glass of water into the bottom of the frame and sashes and check it drains out through the drainage slots. It is far easier to clear a blockage now than after the glass is in.

5. Glaze and “toe and heel” each panel

Lock all the panels closed first. Starting with the panel hinged to the wall, take out the glazing beads and keep a note of where each one came from – they are cut to fit that exact position.

Toe and heeling means packing the glass at two diagonally opposite corners so the glass carries its own weight and holds the sash square. Without it, the panels drop over time and start to catch on the track. Work from the wall end towards the traffic door in a zig-zag pattern:

- Pack the bottom corner on the hinge side first, then the diagonally opposite top corner.
- Use a glazing paddle to lift the sash slightly and push packers in until the glass sits tight.
- Many SOVU doors have red corner packers already fitted to show you where packing goes – add to these rather than removing them.
- Check gaskets have not bunched up in transit before the glass goes in.

Refit the beads, tapping them in gently with a rubber mallet (never a hammer). On doors with 44mm glass, wedge gaskets go in after the beads. When all the panels are glazed, the gap between the top of the sashes and the head of the frame should be about 11mm, and the gaps between panels about 10mm.

6. Final checks

- Fit the final fixing screws into every hinge once the doors run correctly.
- Fit any weather seals that were removed, with the ribbed side facing inwards.
- On doors with a traffic door, fit the magnet catch so the traffic door holds back against the next panel before the others are folded.
- Adjust the lock keeps with an Allen key so each panel pulls in tight when locked.
- Check every panel folds smoothly without dragging, and the outside gasket line is straight.
- Clean out the track and seal the inside perimeter.

Frequently asked questions

Can I fit aluminium bifold doors myself?

Many confident DIYers and builders fit supply-only bifolds. You need at least two people, the right tools and a level, square opening. Replacement doors must also meet Building Regulations, so you will need to notify building control unless a registered installer fits them.

How much gap should I leave around a bifold door frame?

Allow roughly 10–15mm between the frame and the opening on the width and the height. That gives room to pack the frame level and plumb and to seal it.

Why do my bifold doors drag on the track?

Usually the frame is out of level, or the glass has not been toe and heeled properly so the panels have dropped. Re-check the frame with a level and re-pack the glass at the hinge-side bottom corner and opposite top corner.

What gap should there be between the panels and the frame?

On SOVU bifolds the gap between the top of the sashes and the head is about 11mm, and the gap between panels about 10mm. Even gaps show the doors are hung and glazed correctly.

Do I need a sub-cill?

A sub-cill is needed when the doors sit on a brick or block threshold and water needs throwing clear of the wall. It should overhang the outside face by at least 25mm. If you are unsure, send us a photo of your opening before you order.

Ready to order your bifold doors?

See prices for standard sizes up front, or design an exact made-to-measure size online.

Questions about your order or fitting? Call 01924 929600 or visit sovu.co.uk/contact. This guide is online at sovu.co.uk/help-and-guides/how-to-install-aluminium-bifold-doors/