FITTING GUIDE · UPVC WINDOWS

How to Install uPVC Windows

Buying uPVC windows supply-only and having your own builder fit them is one of the best ways to keep the cost of new windows down. This guide explains how SOVU uPVC windows are fitted, from measuring up to the final seal.

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.

Measuring for uPVC windows

Measure the opening in several places across the width and height, inside and out, and use the tightest figures. Take the diagonals to check the opening is square. Allow about a 5mm gap all round the frame for expansion and sealing – so a frame is normally ordered around 10mm smaller than the opening each way. There must be a lintel above, and the frame must not carry any load from the building.

1. Take out the old window

Double-check the new window is the right size and style before you start. Cut through the sealant inside and out with a sharp blade, take out as much glass as you safely can and remove any opening sashes. Then lift out the frame (timber frames usually need cutting) and clean away old sealant, loose mortar and debris.

2. Prepare the cill

Cut the cill about 200mm longer than the window if you want traditional ‘horns’ that wrap round the brickwork, or cut it square to the frame width. Glue the end caps on, run silicone along the cill upstand, and screw the cill to the bottom of the frame with PVC screws that do not break into the glazing rebate. On dark or foiled cills, drill small vent holes underneath about 600mm apart so heat cannot build up and distort them.

3. Fit the frame

Place the frame centrally in the opening on packers, keeping the 5mm gap, and check it is level, plumb and square. Make sure the cill sits on a solid base. Drill fixing holes no closer than 150mm to the corners and at about 600mm centres, with at least two fixings per side, and fix with frame anchors or masonry screws. Put a packer behind every fixing, bridging the full depth of the frame. Frames over 1200mm wide should also be fixed through the head and the bottom.

4. Glaze the window

Clean out any dust, remove the beads and note where each one goes. Clip the glazing platforms into place – these support the glass and are an important part of how the window stays square. Make sure none of them block the drainage slots.

Side-hung opening windows must be toe and heeled: pack the glass at the bottom on the hinge side and the top on the handle side. Push the glass back against the seal, refit the beads starting with the short ones, and tap them in with a nylon mallet. A little glass cleaner sprayed round the edges helps them slide in.

5. Seal and finish

Inside, mask the frame and wall and seal with a decorator's caulk or acrylic sealant so it can be painted. Outside, mask and run a neat bead of silicone between the frame and brickwork, including under the cill. Peel the tape before the sealant sets. Check every opener closes evenly on its seals.

Frequently asked questions

What gap should I leave around a uPVC window?

Around 5mm all round the frame. It allows for expansion and gives room for packers and sealant.

How many fixings does a uPVC window need?

At least two fixings per side, no closer than 150mm to the corners and about 600mm apart. Wider frames over 1200mm also need fixing through the head and cill.

Do new uPVC windows need Building Regulations approval?

Yes. Replacement windows in England and Wales must comply with Building Regulations. A FENSA or CERTASS registered installer can self-certify the work; otherwise you need to notify your local building control.

Why should I toe and heel the glass?

It transfers the weight of the glass onto the hinges and keeps the opening sash square, so the window keeps closing properly.

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