

# Cleaning and Maintaining Your Aluminum Clad Windows

### Cleaning Window and Door Frames

Ply Gem MIRA windows and doors are designed to be virtually maintenance free. A heavy rain is often sufficient to clean the exterior of these products. However, due to weather, environment or atmospheric conditions, the exteriors may become dirty over time and require cleaning.

You can easily wash them using an ordinary garden hose. Do not wash the windows or doors with a high-pressure sprayer. The extreme pressure could crack or destroy the caulking around the window or door. Avoid spraying water directly at weather-stripping joints and seams.

If neither rain nor rinsing with a hose does a satisfactory job cleaning your Ply Gem MIRA windows, follow these simple instructions to clean them:

### Normal Maintenance

For the exterior of your Ply Gem MIRA windows, we recommend you wash the frame and glass using a soft cloth or ordinary long-handled soft bristle brush. Clean textured surfaces with the soft bristle brush to avoid moving dirt and stains into the grooves of the texture or other components.

CLEANERS TO HELP REMOVE STAINS FROM ALUMINUM WINDOWS AND DOORS	
Top Soil	Readily available water-based household cleaners such as Fantastik®, Windex®, and Lysol®.
Motor Oil	
Lithium Grease	
Crayon	
Felt-tip Pen	
Lipstick	
Grass	
Bubble Gum	
Mold & Mildew	Readily available water-based household cleaners such as Fantastik®, Windex®, and Lysol®. Paint stains can be removed using a plastic spatula or credit card to peel the paint off.
Interior Paint	
Oil & Tar	Dissolve using mineral spirits on a soft cloth. Wash and rinse the area thoroughly with a solution of water and car wash soap after cleaning with mineral spirits.

For the exterior cladding, use an automotive cleaner wax to remove stubborn stains and chalk.

To finish cleaning the exterior, use water from a garden hose to dislodge any soil and perform the final rinse. Caution should be used, for many operable windows and doors are not designed to withstand direct, full-pressure, full-volume spray from a typical garden hose. Such windows may allow water to penetrate into unwanted locations when subjected to such a spray. When using a garden hose, always apply the water at a low volume, using moderate water pressure, and an indirect spray. Always start with windows on the upper floors and work down. Minimize the amount of water running over the lower portions of the building to avoid other stains or damage.

### Tilting/Removing your Windows

The sash of Ply Gem MIRA double hung windows can be tilted into the room for easier cleaning of the exterior glass. To tilt a lower sash, unlock and raise the sash 6 inches. Slide the tilt latches, found on top of the sash, toward the center of the window. Gently tilt the window into the room. **WARNING!** Handle the sash carefully! Without proper support, the sash will rotate freely until it strikes the sill of the window. To tilt the upper sash of a double hung window, tilt or remove the lower sash. Lower the upper sash so that you have access to the tilt latches, found on top of the sash. Slide tilt latches toward center of window and gently tilt the window into the room.

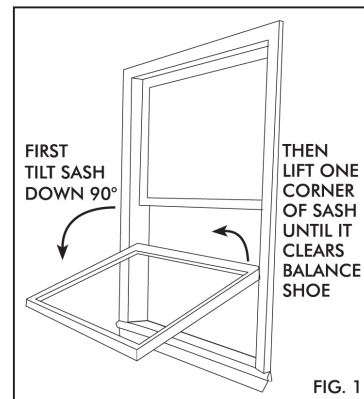


FIG. 1

The sash of Ply Gem MIRA double hung windows can also be removed (**Fig. 1**). To remove the sash, tilt sash inward until it is perpendicular (90° to the wall). Lift one side directly up, so that the pivot bar is clear of the balance shoe on the side of the window. Lift the other side clear of the balance shoe on the opposite jamb. Replace sash by reversing this process – laying sash perpendicular to wall, placing one pivot bar into the balance shoe, then lowering the opposite side of the sash into the opposite balance shoe, and then pushing the sash back into place. **Note:** Be sure that the interior of the sash faces down when reinstalling the sash.

### Label Removal

Only remove temporary labels that do not indicate certification of the products or contain warranty information. Temporary labels are generally applied to the glass and obviously impede the view. They can be carefully peeled off the glass, with any remaining adhesive removed using mineral spirits or with rubbing alcohol. Rinse the glass area with a solution of water and mild dishwashing detergent after using these products. Avoid scratching the glass with razor blades or other sharp tools.

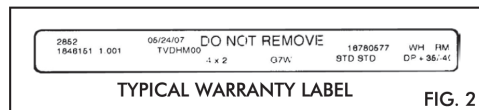


FIG. 2

Permanent labels such as AAMA, WDMA and Warranty product certification labels should not be removed (**Fig. 2**). They will generally be located in inconspicuous locations in the head of windows or can only be seen when the sash is tilted inward. **Note:** Masking tape should not be used on glass surfaces. Masking tape may, when heated by sunlight, bake into the glass and/or window frame, causing damage when removed.

### Painting

Do not paint weather-stripping on sides of sash. Mask before painting, or remove weather-strip and mask the weather-strip kerf before painting.



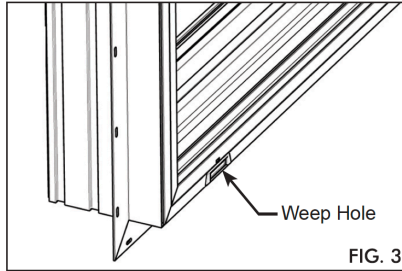
**IMPORTANT: DO NOT PAINT ALUMINUM COMPONENTS.**  
Painting aluminum may void your product warranty.

### Sash Lubrication

Occasionally the sash operates with difficulty and needs minor lubrication. Before lubricating movable panel tracks, the installer/homeowner should verify that the lubricant is compatible with the vinyl, aluminum, or other materials used in the product's assembly. If silicone aerosol sprays are used, they should be prevented from contacting glass surfaces, as they can permanently mar the glass. We recommend a spray furniture polish for best results.

### Exterior Weep Holes

Some of our window and door products come with built-in exterior water drainage systems called "weep holes." These appear on the exterior of our window & door products at the sill area, & also on mull strips, and must remain clear of obstruction to function properly (**Fig. 3**).



**IF THESE HOLES ARE BLOCKED BY TAPE, DEBRIS OR CAULK, YOU MAY HAVE THE POSSIBILITY FOR WATER INFILTRATION INSIDE YOUR HOME!**

### Window Caulking

In many installations, caulking is used to prevent air and moisture from entering around the window. Where visible, this caulk must be examined annually for cracks or other damage. If damaged, reapply the with an exterior-grade caulk, following the caulk manufacturer's instructions for application. Pay particular attention to the joints in aluminum cladding and mull areas.

### Casement Maintenance

Your Ply Gem MIRA casement window will provide you years of fine service, provided you regularly clean the operating zone of the unit. To do this, open the window fully and remove screen. Clean the upper and lower hinge tracks, and the sill of the window, using a soft cloth dampened with a solution of water and mild dishwashing liquid. Rinse thoroughly, removing residual dishwashing liquid to prevent streaking of the exterior of the home. Hinge slides can be lubricated using light grease or Vaseline®. Do not use WD-40 or penetrating oils.

## PATIO DOOR MAINTENANCE

### Cleaning Roller Tracks

The Ply Gem MIRA sliding patio door roller track can collect dirt or construction debris, which will result in rough operation of the door panel. If the door does not glide smoothly across the sill, check the sill track for debris. To clean the roller track, simply use a vacuum cleaner to pick up the loose material, and then use a cloth or sponge and a solution of water and mild dishwashing liquid to finish the cleaning. The screen roller track can also be cleaned in the same fashion.

### Cleaning the Water Management System

Periodically clean any debris from this channel to allow proper flow of water through the water management system.



### Sliding Door Locking Mechanism Adjustment

To adjust the amount of throw (reach) the mortise lock hook will have, open the door to gain access to the edge of the door with the mortise lock. Rotate the adjustment screw (located above the hook) clockwise to extend the hook, or counterclockwise to retract the hook. Close the door, turn the lock, and check the clearance again by trying to open the door while in the locked position. A limited amount of play should be allowed between the lock and the keeper.

Cleaners containing organic solvents or other aggressive ingredients can affect the surface appearance. Examples of such cleaners are: chlorine bleach, liquid grease remover, strong soaps, nail polish remover, detergents containing organic solvents, and muriatic acid. Note that the use of any abrasive material (including mildly abrasive cleaners) will alter surface appearance. Any damage is the responsibility of the homeowner. Products are registered trademarks of their respected companies.

### Maintaining in Coastal or Other Corrosive Environments

Clad products installed within one (1) mile of a salt-water source (or other corrosive environment) require additional and specific maintenance. Coastal, corrosive, and humid areas require proper finishing and maintenance of wood and cleaning and caring for metal clad surfaces. Bi-annual inspections are sufficient for most areas; however, coastal/corrosive areas require monthly inspections because of moisture and salt in the air.

### For New Windows

1. Use a mild soap and water solution to wash windows
2. Rinse well
3. Apply light car wax to exterior cladding. Please note to wash and rinse before applying wax to ensure all residue is cleaned from window.

### For Installed Windows (already exposed to environments)

If windows are already installed and have been exposed to the elements:

1. Use mineral spirits to clean built up deposits
2. Use a mild soap/water solution to clean windows, and rinse.
3. Annually, apply a light car wax to exterior cladding.

**Note:** Wash and rinse before applying wax to clean residue from window and doors.

In corrosive environments windows should be rinsed monthly to reduce salt deposit build-ups.

### References

Please refer to our installation instruction for detailed instructions, and for more information concerning Ply Gem Windows go to [windows.plygem.com](http://windows.plygem.com)

For information on paints, see below:

- [mohawk-finishing.com](http://mohawk-finishing.com)
- [valspar.com](http://valspar.com)
- [sherwin-williams.com](http://sherwin-williams.com)



**IMPORTANT: DO NOT PAINT ALUMINUM COMPONENTS.**  
Painting aluminum may void your product warranty.

For further assistance call Customer Care:  
1-800-999-8400 Monday-Friday 8am to 4:30pm EST

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