

Cold weather has a way of exposing weaknesses in a house. Windows are usually first to rat out the rest of the envelope. You notice the chill around the frames, a ghostly smear between panes that never wipes off, and the heating bill nudging upward even though you're wearing an extra jumper. If the glass looks milky from the inside and the room feels drafty despite shut windows, you may be dealing with blown or misted double glazing. Winter complicates repairs, but it doesn't make them impossible. With the right approach you can get solid results without waiting for spring.

I've managed Double Glazing Repairs for decades, from cramped terraces in sleet to exposed coastal homes with salt in the air. Winter jobs demand patience, but they're often the most rewarding because you feel the impact immediately. The trick is understanding what "blown" really means, deciding what to tackle now versus later, and using techniques that work well in low temperatures.

What "blown" means and why it happens

Modern double glazed units are sealed insulating glass units, or IGUs. Two panes are spaced apart and sealed around the perimeter, usually with a spacer bar filled with desiccant to absorb any residual moisture. The space is sometimes filled with argon. When the perimeter seal fails, outdoor air and moisture get in. The desiccant becomes saturated and condensation starts forming between the panes. You can wipe the inside and outside until your arm aches, that haze will not budge.

A blown unit isn't just about looks. Once moisture enters, thermal performance drops because the gas fill is lost and the internal surfaces carry water films that bridge heat. You'll notice the room cool faster and minor drafts feel sharper. Timber frames can also suffer because persistent condensation raises local humidity.

Causes vary. UV exposure dries out seals over time. On south facing elevations the failure rate is higher. Poor drainage pathways in the frame allow water to pool against the seal, accelerating breakdown. Aggressive cleaning with blades or harsh chemicals can nick the edge seal. I also see failures after DIY handle replacements where the sash is pried and flexed, cracking the sealant channel.

None of these are season specific, but winter magnifies the symptoms. The cold air outside means the dew point is frequently crossed, so moisture appears as a fog more often and for longer.

Can you fix blown double glazing in winter?

Yes, with caveats. You cannot "re-seal" the existing glass unit to like-new performance on site. A failed IGU needs replacement to restore insulation, clarity, and long-term reliability. What you can do in winter is either replace the entire IGU, which is the proper repair, or apply temporary measures that reduce heat loss and visual fog until you can schedule a full replacement.

For most uPVC, timber, and aluminium windows fitted in the last 30 years, replacing the IGU in winter is feasible. The frame stays in the wall. The glass unit is measured, ordered, and swapped out. The constraints are weather safety, lead times from the glass supplier, and maintaining the building's heat while the sash is open.

Where I hesitate in sub-zero conditions is with certain timber sashes that require frame repair, or where paint and glazing compounds need curing time. Polymer sealants can be sensitive below about 5 degrees Celsius, so technique and product choice matter. But for a straightforward misted double glazing replacement, winter is fair game.

How to tell if your unit is truly blown

Several clues stack up:

- The mist is between the panes and stays put regardless of cleaning, tightening, or humidity changes inside the room. If the fog moves or clears with ventilation, you may be seeing surface condensation on the inner pane rather than a blown unit.
- You spot dirt lines or “snail trails” vertically inside the cavity. This often shows where moisture washed dust down the inner glass.
- The spacer bar desiccant port looks rusty or stained. On some bars you can see a dryness indicator bead, though that’s less common now.
- There is a clear draft from the frame or hinge side even with rubber gaskets intact. That suggests a separate air tightness issue, which often accompanies a blown unit but isn’t the same defect.

Checking in the morning helps because the temperature gradient is greatest and fogging peaks. A torch beam can reveal the double reflection. If three reflections appear, one is likely a Low-E coating and one a misaligned pane, which tells you the unit is intact but the haze is inside the cavity.

If you have doubts, a glazing technician can test the seals, inspect drainage slots, and confirm whether the unit has lost gas.

Replacement versus repair kits

You’ll find products advertised as Misted Double Glazing Repairs that drill micro-holes into the glass, inject drying agents, then plug the holes with vents. These de-misting systems do clear the fog and can improve the view, especially when the property is up for sale and time is short. But they don’t restore the original thermal performance, and the cavity will now communicate with ambient air through the vents. In a kitchen or bathroom you can end up cycling moisture through the vents and seeing patterns return in damp weather.

I use such approaches only on secondary spaces or when the frame cannot be disturbed for a period, for example in a listed building where approvals are pending. If energy efficiency and durability matter, you want a new sealed unit set correctly in the frame.

Ordering the right IGU in winter

Accuracy matters because winter schedules punish mistakes. A wrong size means a second lead time and another cold day with a sash open. Most of the job is in measuring correctly. You need glass size, cavity width, glass specification, and any special coatings.

For a common uPVC casement, you remove the glazing beads to measure the visible glass and then infer the rebate depth, but an experienced fitter usually measures the unit in situ using calipers for thickness and several diagonal checks to confirm squareness. On a timber sash with putty, you measure sightlines and account for bedding compound. If the unit sits on glazing packers, note their position and thickness so you can recreate load paths.

Winter tip: specify warm-edge spacers and a Low-E coating if your current units lack them. The cost difference is modest and the comfort change is noticeable. If your home is in a noisy area, this is the moment to upgrade one pane to laminated acoustic glass. For coastal properties, ask for stainless or high-spec spacer materials to resist corrosion.

Lead times vary: local fabricators can turn around standard units in 3 to 7 working days. Specialty glass with patterned obscurity, toughening, or laminated security can take 10 to 20 days. Plan for at least one visit to survey and a second to install.

The installation challenges in cold weather

Two things complicate winter work: materials stiffening and shorter daylight. Rubber gaskets harden in the cold and don't seat as readily. Silicone and hybrid sealants skin over slowly. For timber frames, oil-based putties can be reluctant to set. You need a few practical adjustments.

I warm the glazing beads and gaskets indoors before heading to site. They snap into place without tearing the barbs. I also carry a heat mat for the sealant tubes and keep them in the van's cab rather than the back. A sealant rated for low temperature application, usually to minus 10 degrees Celsius, is worth the couple of extra pounds.

Timing matters. Choose a dry window in the forecast, even if it means an early start between showers. If the room is critical, such as a nursery, limit exposure by removing and replacing one sash at a time or using heavy dust sheets as temporary barriers. In gusty conditions, a second person stabilises large IGUs so they don't flex. Remember that toughened glass can hold latent stress that reacts to cold, so avoid quick temperature shocks.

Temporary measures if you cannot replace immediately

Sometimes the supplier has a backlog, or the budget needs a month. In that case a few weeks of triage can make the home more comfortable. These are stopgaps, not miracles.

- Improve the airtightness around the frame using new wedge gaskets or brush seals on hinges and meeting rails. Stiff winter gaskets can leave hairline gaps that feel like a leak. Replacing them often takes less than an hour per window.
- Add a removable secondary glazing panel. Magnetic acrylic panels are popular because they install without drilling and can be taken down in spring. They halt drafts and reduce the temperature gradient on the inner pane, which shrinks fogging.
- Use a clear insulating film kit across the sash. The result isn't pretty, but it tightens the interior surface temperature and can lower heat loss by a noticeable margin.
- Reduce indoor humidity during a cold snap. Run the extractor when cooking and showering, keep lids on boiling pots, and don't dry laundry on radiators near the affected window. Lower humidity means less condensation inside the cavity and on interior surfaces, so the fog looks less severe in the day.
- If water is pooling in the bottom of the frame, clear drainage slots. A quick pass with a cotton bud or cable tie often frees debris and lets water escape rather than bathe the edge seal.

None of these fixes a blown unit, but they buy comfort and protect timber until the proper job is done.

Cost and value, winter edition

For standard sizes, replacing an IGU typically costs a fraction of a full window replacement. In many UK towns the going rate for typical casement units ranges roughly from £90 to £180 per opening unit for smaller panes, up to £250 or more for large or toughened units. Bay windows, shaped glass, or laminated security panes cost more. Prices vary by region and accessibility. Winter rates sometimes carry a small premium because installers work shorter days and need extra hands for safety, though some firms discount to keep crews busy.

Compare that to the energy penalty of living with a blown unit. A single failed window can add a few percent to a small home's heat loss, especially when wind finds its way through loose seals. Over a winter, that difference can pay a fair portion of the replacement cost, particularly with today's energy tariffs. You also avoid secondary damage like swollen timber beads or black spotting on reveals from chronic damp.

Safety and warranty considerations

Glazing is not complicated, but it is unforgiving. A chipped corner or incorrectly placed packer can shorten a unit's life. Working at height in winter with icy sills is the wrong day to discover a ladder foot is worn. For ground floor casements and simple bead systems, a careful DIYer can handle a replacement with the right suction cups, shims, and patience. For upstairs, bays, roof lights, or sliding doors, bring in a professional.

Check warranties before you touch anything. Many frames carry 10-year coverage on IGUs. If you start removing beads and seals, you may void remaining coverage. A quick call to the installer or manufacturer can save money. When out of warranty, a reputable firm will measure, supply, fit, and offer at least a few years' guarantee on the new unit.

The step-by-step flow of a winter replacement

Here is a concise sequence that reflects best practice when weather is cold and unpredictable.

- Survey, measure, and photograph. Confirm glass type, coatings, and spacer color so the replacement matches neighbors. Check frame condition and drainage.
- Order the unit with cold-weather timing in mind. Ask for a delivery window that aligns with a dry day, and choose low-temperature rated sealants and gaskets.
- Prepare the room. Clear furniture, lay dust sheets, and preheat the space an hour before work so materials and people are comfortable.
- Remove beads or putty with care. Warm gaskets or beads indoors so they remain pliable. Keep track of bead order since they often fit best in the same position.
- Install, pack, and seal. Use glazing packers to carry the unit's weight on the hinge side for opening sashes, check diagonals, and re-fit beads. Finish with an external weather seal appropriate for the frame material.

That last step, pack and seal, is where many jobs falter. In winter, over-compressing gaskets to force a quick closure can twist the frame slightly. Come spring, the sash binds or the lock misaligns. Take the extra five minutes to adjust hinges and keeps after the unit is seated. Operate [Misted Window Repairs](#) the window several times to confirm smooth action.

Edge cases and when to wait for spring

Some situations argue for patience.



A traditional single-glazed timber sash that you plan to convert to double glazing deserves warm, dry conditions for joinery and paint. Winter humidity makes fine work miserable. If you must proceed, phase the job: restore draught-proofing now and schedule sash removal for a milder stretch.

Silicone reliant installations in persistent freezing temperatures are tricky because cure times stretch. There are cold-applied sealants, but they still need a dry surface and some curing window. If your only available day is both wet and below freezing, reschedule rather than trap moisture under a bead.

Large-format sliding doors or roof lanterns are heavy and demand more hands on site. High winds plus glass are a bad marriage. I've turned back from jobs on days with gusts above 30 mph. The glass supplier will thank you, and so will your insurance.

Practical maintenance that protects your investment

After you replace a blown unit, look after the frames and seals. Simple habits go a long way. Clean the frame channels, especially the drainage slots, a couple of times a year. A soft brush and warm soapy water clears grit that would otherwise sit against the edge seal. Lubricate hinges with a silicone-safe spray annually, not oil that attracts

dust. Avoid scraping paint on rubber gaskets; mask them before painting reveals. If you jet wash the exterior, keep the nozzle away from glazing edges. High-pressure water quickly finds the weakest point.

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Inside, keep a handle on moisture. Bathrooms and kitchens need extractor fans that actually extract. If you notice recurring condensation on the interior pane in winter mornings, that's usually room humidity rather than blown glazing. A hygrometer can help you aim for indoor relative humidity between roughly 40 and 60 percent. In older homes with solid walls, humidity spikes can encourage mould on the coldest corners even with perfect windows. Soft measures like leaving a door ajar after showers matter as much as the glass.

When a misted unit hides bigger problems

Every so often, I find blown glazing is the symptom, not the cause. Frames out of square from subsidence, failed lintels causing differential movement, or poorly flashed exterior cladding can all put stress on windows. If multiple units on the same elevation fail early and together, it is worth stepping back. Do you see cracks in plaster radiating from window corners? Does the sill hold standing water after rain? Is there evidence of previous filler work around the frame? Deal with the underlying issue, or you'll be ordering glass again in a few years.

What to ask when hiring for Double Glazing Repairs in winter

A short conversation separates pros from seat-of-the-pants operators. Ask about their plan for bad weather days. They should have no issue rescheduling if conditions are unsafe. Ask which sealants and packers they use and whether they are rated for your frame material. For timber, probe their approach to bedding compounds. For aluminium, check thermal break compatibility. Request a firm quote that includes disposal of old units, matching spacer color, and any trims. A good installer will also advise honestly if a de-mist kit makes sense in a specific oddball case, not just push glass.

The answer you came for

Can you fix blown double glazing in winter? Yes, and you probably should if the unit fogs repeatedly and the room runs cold. The best practice is a like-for-like or upgraded IGU replacement, fitted with care, using materials that behave in low temperatures, and with attention to drainage and packing. If timing or budget demand a pause, use temporary measures like secondary glazing and improved seals to hold comfort steady. Keep expectations clear about what de-misting services can and cannot do. Winter adds friction to the process, not impossibility.

From a homeowner's point of view, the payoff is immediate. Rooms feel less raw, heating cycles settle down, and you stop wiping a ghostly patch every morning. From a professional's point of view, winter glazing is about sequencing, product choice, and respect for the weather. Get those right, and you won't be staring through a cloud again next January.