Anyone who has lived with double glazing for a few winters knows the feeling. One morning the window looks fuzzy, not on the inside you can wipe, not on the outside where a squeegee would help, but somewhere in between. The view gets milky. On cold days you notice draughts you never used to feel. Your heating works harder, yet the room still feels a touch chilly. That is the everyday face of blown double glazing, and it usually shows up years after installation, long after the paperwork is stuffed in a drawer.

I have spent years around window fitters, glaziers, and homeowners weighing their options while a kettle boils. Blown units are common, fixable in many cases, and preventable if you pay attention early. The trick is learning to read the signs and match the fix to the fault. Not every misted pane needs a full **Double Glazing Repairs** frame replacement, and not every patch of condensation spells doom. Let's unpack what is going on inside the glass, the practical fixes that work, and the small habits that keep a good window good for longer.

What "blown" actually means

A modern double glazed unit has two panes separated by a spacer bar that creates a sealed cavity. Manufacturers dry that cavity with desiccant, often fill it with argon to improve thermal performance, and then seal the edges with flexible compounds that keep moisture out. A unit is "blown" when that edge seal fails enough for outside air to enter the cavity and the desiccant becomes saturated. Moist air finds a cold interior surface, condenses, and leaves droplets or a film between the panes. Because you can't reach that space, you cannot wipe the moisture away. Over time, repeated wetting and drying leaves mineral spots, streaks, and a permanent fog.

Some people use blown loosely for any condensation. It helps to be precise. Water on the room side of the inner pane is usually indoor humidity and ventilation, not a blown unit. Water between the panes points to a failed seal. Water on the outside face during dewy mornings is normal and shows the outer pane is cooler than the air, a sign the unit is insulating well.

Not every blown unit leaks water, either. Sometimes the seal is only slightly compromised. The gas content gradually drops, the thermal performance lags, and you feel the room cooling long before you see mist. If you press your palm against the inner pane on a frosty evening and it feels much colder than other windows, you may be catching early failure.

Common symptoms and how to tell them apart

The obvious sign is mist or droplets trapped inside the unit. It can come and go with the weather. On damp mornings the haze thickens, then seems to clear by afternoon. People often mistake that cycle for a window "getting better." In reality the desiccant is overwhelmed, moisture is moving freely in and out, and the problem will settle into a constant film over months.

Look closely at the inner edges. The spacer bar often shows small beads of water or a tide mark. Streaks that never wipe off are another clue, especially if you see white mineral tracing that looks like hard-water marks. These are left behind after repeated condensation events inside the cavity.

Drafts are trickier. A blown sealed unit does not create a path for air to leak into the room, so if you feel a breeze, it is likely the frame, gasket, or trickle vent, not the glass. However, a failed unit loses thermal insulation, so you may sense colder air falling off the pane, which people describe as a draught. I keep a thin strip of tissue to test. If it flutters near the frame joints, the air is moving. If it lies still but the area feels cold, you are feeling convection from a cold surface, not a literal draft.

Energy bills tell a longer story. One or two failed units in a typical semi will not double your gas usage. But in a room with a high glass ratio, a conservatory for example, several misted units can push your boiler to cycle more often. If you track your smart meter and notice a steady rise independent of thermostat changes, inspect the glazing closely.

Sound insulation can also degrade. Argon gas and intact seals help block noise. When the seal fails and the gas is replaced by air, that subtle hush fades. I have had clients who first noticed traffic noise creeping back months before the fog appeared.

Why seals fail in the first place

Time does the obvious work. Most double glazed units are warranted for 5 to 10 years against seal failure, and the majority last longer, somewhere in the 12 to 20 year range, depending on build quality and exposure. UV light, heat cycles, and wind flex the frame and the unit, stressing edge seals. Thermoplastic spacers deal with movement better than old aluminum spacers, but no seal is forever.

Poor drainage and blocked weep holes in the frame speed up failure. When water sits against the bottom edge of the glass, especially in uPVC frames without regular maintenance, it attacks the sealant and eventually finds a pathway into the cavity. Wooden frames that hold moisture against the glazing can cause similar trouble.

Incorrect glazing packers or installation technique can twist a unit. I have seen panes installed tight against the frame at one corner, so the daily thermal expansion squeezes the edge seal until it lets go. Thermal shock, like hosing a sun-baked pane with cold water, can add stress, though it is not a common cause.

Harsh chemical cleaners can seep into the edge and degrade sealants over time. If you see a rainbow sheen along the edges where cleaner pooled and dried, be gentler with products. Warm soapy water is usually enough, with a mild glass cleaner used sparingly and wiped away.

Can you live with it for a while?

Many people do. A misted unit is not an immediate safety hazard if the glass remains sound. The downsides accumulate quietly. The room gets colder. The view turns flat on bright days. Sun glare diffuses, which some people like, but you lose natural light clarity. If resale is on your mind, surveyors clock misted panes instantly and either flag them for replacement or adjust valuation. I have watched buyers use a handful of blown units as leverage for a several hundred pound discount, even when the fix would have cost less.

If the failure is minor and the pane only fogs during certain weather, you might buy a season by improving airflow and controlling humidity indoors. Run extractor fans, especially in bathrooms and kitchens. Keep trickle vents open. But understand this only reduces the visible symptom. The sealed unit no longer does its best work, and it will not heal.

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Can you fix blown double glazing?

You can, and you usually have options. People search for Double Glazing Repairs and find everything from full replacements to “restoration” kits. The right choice depends on the unit age, frame condition, budget, and how long you plan to stay in the property. The blunt truth: if the edge seal has failed, the textbook fix is to replace the sealed unit. That does not always mean replacing the whole window frame. In many cases you can swap just the glass, keep your existing frames, and restore performance.

Misted Double Glazing Repairs, the phrase you often see in ads, covers three broad approaches.

First, replace only the sealed unit. A glazier measures your existing pane thickness, the cavity width, the spacer type, glass spec (clear, low-E, toughened, laminated), and any glazing bars or leads. They order a new double glazed unit and pop it into your existing frame, re-packing and sealing Misted Window Repairs as needed. In uPVC and aluminum frames, this is straightforward. In timber frames it takes more care to avoid damaging the beads. Costs vary by size and spec, but for an average casement window, you are typically looking at a few hundred pounds per unit rather than thousands for whole-window replacements. Thermal performance returns to factory levels, and if you upgrade to warm-edge spacers or argon-filled, it might even improve.

Second, consider specialist defogging services. Technicians drill tiny holes in the outer pane, flush the cavity with a cleaning solution, draw out moisture, and insert one-way vents or plugs that allow ongoing evaporation. This method clears the view in many cases and is cheaper than a new unit. The trade-off is performance. The cavity is no longer hermetically sealed and is usually air-filled. Low-E coatings can be damaged during cleaning if not handled with care. If your main aim is to restore clarity on a budget in a less critical space, a garage or a spare room, this can make sense. For living spaces where energy performance matters, I prefer replacement.

Third, replace the entire window, frame included. That is the most invasive and costly option, and it makes sense when frames are at end-of-life, when you want to change opening configurations, improve security hardware, or upgrade to triple glazing. If your frames are warped, leaking, or rotting, a new sealed unit is a sticking plaster.

I get asked often: Can you Fix Blown Double Glazing yourself? For a sealed unit swap, a competent DIYer with glazing suckers, packers, and an understanding of how to de-bead and re-bead without damaging the frame can manage it. The risks are real, especially with toughened glass that can explode if mishandled, or with large panes that flex. Incorrect packing causes point loads and early failure. A mis-measure by even a few millimeters means a unit that does not seat. In timber, putty work must be watertight. If you are unsure, a local glazier will be faster and, in many cases, cheaper than the cost of a mistake.

Step-by-step: how a sealed unit replacement works

For those curious about the process, the rhythm is simple. A glazier visits to measure. They note width, height, glass thickness, cavity depth, and any special glass like safety glazing near doors or in low-level windows. They record coatings and orientation because low-E glass must face the right way. Leaded designs or Georgian bars must match.

Back at the workshop, the unit is ordered. Lead times are typically 5 to 10 working days, longer if you need obscure patterns or toughened safety glass which must be heat-treated. On fitting day, beads come off in sequence with a pry tool, the old unit is eased out, packers adjusted, the new unit bedded on setting blocks at the correct points, squareness checked, then beads and gaskets reinstalled. Everything is cleaned down and the weep holes checked.

In timber, the old putty or beads are removed, rebates cleaned, primer applied if necessary, then the new unit is bedded in fresh glazing compound with spacers to maintain the cavity edge from sitting in standing water. The finish needs to be painted or sealed to keep moisture out.

In a normal house, swapping two or three units is an afternoon’s work. There is little mess beyond some dust and the odd bead of old sealant. You keep your existing sight lines and hardware, which often matters more than people expect.

The role of ventilation versus seal failure

Many windows get blamed for what is really a lifestyle moisture problem. Showers, cooking, plants, wet laundry on radiators, and tightly sealed homes all drive indoor humidity up. On cold mornings, that moisture condenses on the first cold surface, often glass. If the moisture wipes off on the room side, your sealed unit is still intact. Improve airflow. Use extractor fans and actually let them run on overrun timers. Keep internal doors cracked while drying laundry or better yet, dry outside or in a ventilated utility space. Mould growth around frames is another sign of high humidity rather than blown glass.

This matters because I have been called out to “misted” windows that were nothing of the sort. One small change made a big difference for a family of four who saw morning condensation every winter. They swapped a silent but weak 6 litre per second bathroom fan for a 15 litre per second one with a humidity sensor and used trickle vents properly. The glass stayed dry. Their double glazing did not need any work.

When insurance or warranty helps

If your units are relatively new, check the paperwork. Installers in many regions belong to competent person schemes that back warranties. Manufacturer guarantees against seal failure often run a decade for standard units. Keep realistic expectations. A warranty usually covers the replacement of the sealed unit, not any incidental decoration or the cost to hire scaffolding for a high elevation, and not the whole window unless the frame product itself is warranted. If a builder installed your windows as part of an extension, the responsibility chain can be confusing. Start with the installer. If they have ceased trading, some schemes offer insurance-backed guarantees that still pay out.

Storm or impact damage sits in a different category. A pane cracked by a ball or branch is not a blown seal issue. Home insurance often covers accidental damage, but excesses can make small claims pointless. If you replace one cracked pane, consider matching the spec on adjacent panes to avoid visual differences.

Cost ranges and value judgment

Numbers vary by region and spec, but some rough figures help decision-making. Swapping a standard clear, argon-filled, low-E double glazed unit in a medium casement window often lands in the £120 to £250 range per unit, supplied and fitted, in many UK towns. Add complexity like toughened glass, larger sizes, or integral blinds and costs climb. Timber work takes longer and may be more.

Defogging services often quote 40 to 60 percent of the price of a new unit. For a small pane you might save £50 to £80. For a large bay, the relative saving is bigger. The trade-off is performance and longevity. In my experience, defogged units sometimes mist again after a few seasons, especially in exposed coastal locations.

Full window replacements, frame and all, start from a few hundred pounds for a small uPVC casement and scale to several thousand for large or bespoke timber units. The payoff includes new gaskets, locks, and thermal breaks, so if your frames are old and leaky, the energy savings are real.

Value is not just numbers. A crisp, clear view and a warmer room change how a space feels. In a north-facing living room where winter light is precious, I advise replacing misted units promptly. In a seldom-used utility room, you might defer.

Prevention that actually makes a difference

Edge seals fail over time, yet you can slow the clock. The little tasks matter. Keep frame drainage clear. Those slots along the bottom of many uPVC frames, the weep holes, are not decoration. Vacuum them during a seasonal clean. If you notice water pooling in the frame after rain, something is blocked.

Be gentle with cleaning. Avoid sloshing solvent-based cleaners along the edges. A damp cloth with mild detergent followed by a dry wipe does the job. When painting timber windows, maintain the paint line that seals the glazing rebate. Cracks in putty or failing beads let water soak in. Catch them early.

Control interior humidity. Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery is ideal in tight modern homes, but even basic habits help. Close bathroom doors during showers, run extractors, and leave them on while steam clears. Keep kitchen lids on pans. In winter, aim for an indoor relative humidity around 40 to 55 percent. Cheap digital hygrometers cost less than a takeaway and give a useful read on your air.

Watch for subtle shifts. If a window begins to feel colder or the noise level creeps up, note it and look for early condensation inside the cavity. Replacing a unit before streaks etch the glass protects the view.

Avoid thermal shock where possible. Do not pour cold water on hot glass during a heatwave to cool the room. It rarely ends well for the pane or the seal.

Finally, insist on quality at installation. Warm-edge spacers, properly specified low-E glass, argon fill, and good perimeter sealing make a difference. A well-fitted unit with the right packers and correct drainage detailing lasts longer than a cheap one hammered into place.

A quick homeowner’s check before you call for Double Glazing Repairs

- Wipe test: if moisture wipes off on the inside face, it is not a blown unit. Improve ventilation first.
- Edge inspection: look for beads of water or mineral lines along the spacer bar between panes, a strong sign of seal failure.
- Frame health: check gaskets for gaps, beads for movement, and weep holes for blockage. Fix these to rule out drafts not related to the glass.
- Compare rooms: if one elevation shows multiple misted units and others do not, exposure or blocked drainage may be the culprit.
- Paperwork check: find the install date and any warranty details, which can shift costs in your favor.

Special cases worth noting

Toughened safety glass behaves differently. It has a tempered surface that can show visual artifacts when misting occurs, and it is heavier to handle. If your blown unit sits in a door or low-level window, building regulations usually require safety glass. Always replace like-with-like.

Lead patterns and Georgian bars add complexity. Surface-applied lead can delaminate during defogging. Integral bars inside the cavity can trap moisture and are harder to clean if you go the drilled route. Exact matching is possible for new units, but measurements must be precise to align the pattern with adjacent panes.

Triple glazing is more sensitive to correct packing and frame suitability. A blown triple unit loses more performance than a double when seals fail, and replacement costs more. In highly insulated homes, address any failure swiftly to protect the overall energy balance.

Conservatories live a rough life. Large glass areas, high sun, and big temperature swings shorten seal life. If several units mist within a year or two of each other, consider whether the original specification was adequate. Upgrading to units with warm-edge spacers and robust seals during replacement helps, and adding roof blinds can cut peak temperatures that stress seals.

What to expect from a good repair service

A reputable Misted Double Glazing Repairs specialist starts with inspection, not a hard sell. They should explain whether your frames are sound, whether replacement of the sealed unit alone will solve the problem, and where drainage or gaskets need attention. They should measure carefully and discuss glass specification. If you live near a busy road, ask about acoustic laminates. If you struggle with solar gain, consider a low solar factor coating on south-facing panes.

They should give a written quote that itemizes units, glass type, and any extras. Lead times should be clear. On the day, they should protect floors, handle glass with proper gear, and show you how the weep holes and gaskets sit after the job. A modest warranty on the new sealed unit, often 5 years, is standard.

Be wary of anyone promising to “re-gas” an existing unit without replacing the seal. Without resealing, gas will escape again. Equally, be careful with claims of miracle sealants that “heal” blown units through the edge. If such products worked reliably, the industry would use them at scale.

The honest answer to, “Should I fix this now?”

Think about three factors: how bad the symptom is, how important the room is to your daily comfort, and what your next five years look like. If the pane is fully fogged and the room feels cold, act soon. If you plan to sell within a year, tidy blown units now because they will be flagged in surveys. If this is your forever home, replace the sealed units with good-quality spec and forget about them for a decade or more. If money is tight and the room is secondary, you might defer or choose a defog service as a stopgap, understanding the trade-offs.

I have seen households transform the feel of a space by dealing with four or five tired panes at once rather than chasing them one by one over years. The labor efficiencies and the mental relief of a clear view are worth something.

Final thoughts you can use

Blown double glazing looks worse than it is, and it is not a moral failing of your housekeeping. Sealed units age. Some fail early because of installation quirks or harsh exposure; most fail eventually. The good news is that the fix is often simple and targeted. In many cases you keep your frames, correct the unit, and reclaim the view and warmth in a single afternoon.

Double Glazing Repairs is a broad label, but your path is narrow and practical. Confirm the symptom, protect against moisture with basic maintenance, weigh the cost and performance of defogging against replacement, and choose a competent glazier to execute. Ask about warm-edge spacers, argon fill, and the right low-E orientation. Keep the weep holes clear and the edge seals free of harsh chemicals. Small habits mean fewer misted mornings.

If you remember nothing else: moisture between panes means the seal is gone; wiping won’t help; you can likely replace just the sealed unit; and prevention lives in ventilation, drainage, and gentle care. That is the whole story, minus the steam on the kettle and the relief as the room warms up again.