

Foggy Window Repair: When Sealed Units Fail and How Pros Fix Them

There is a moment every DFW homeowner recognizes. You are standing in the living room on a bright winter morning, and instead of a clear view of the backyard, you see a milky haze trapped between two panes of glass. At first you think it is condensation on the inside, but a quick wipe confirms it is not. The fog is sealed inside the window itself. That is the moment you start searching for foggy window repair.

I have been in the window and glass industry for over a decade, and I have walked through thousands of homes where this exact problem has gone untreated for years. The homeowners usually assume they need a full window replacement, which sounds expensive and disruptive. In many cases, that assumption is wrong. There are real repair options that cost less and take less time than a full swap, and the choice depends on understanding what caused the failure in the first place.

How Insulated Glass Units Work and Why They Fail

Modern windows are not single slabs of glass. They are insulated glass units, or IGUs, built from two or three panes separated by a spacer and sealed around the edges. The space between panes is filled with a gas like Argon gas or, in higher-end units, a blend of Argon and Krypton. That gas fill slows heat transfer and improves energy efficiency. A low-E coating on one of the inner surfaces reflects infrared light, keeping heat inside during winter and outside during summer.

The whole assembly relies on a weather seal around the perimeter and a moisture-absorbing material called desiccant inside the spacer. The desiccant is there to trap any residual humidity left during manufacturing. As long as the seal holds, the unit stays dry and clear. But seals do not last forever.

When a glass seal failure occurs, the airtight barrier is broken. Moisture infiltration follows quickly. Humid outside air seeps into the cavity, and the desiccant becomes saturated. Once it cannot absorb any more water, condensation forms on the inner surfaces of the panes. Over time, that condensation turns into the foggy film you see. The same process can leave behind mineral deposits that etch the glass, making the haze permanent even after the moisture evaporates.



BBB Rating: A+

As of 10/6/2026

[Click for Profile](#)

Common Causes of Seal Failure

Thermal stress is the most frequent culprit. In North Texas, summer heat can push surface temperatures on a south-facing window well above 140 degrees Fahrenheit, while winter nights dip below freezing. That repeated expansion and contraction puts pressure on the sealant and spacer. A small defect or a weak bond eventually gives way.

Poor installation also plays a role. If the window frame is not properly flashed, water can pool against the bottom edge of the IGU and accelerate seal degradation. And sometimes the seal itself was simply underspecified for the size of the unit. Large picture windows and fixed panes are especially prone because the weight of the glass and the thermal movement are greater than what standard sealants can handle over a decade or two.

Impact damage is another trigger. A stray baseball or a hailstorm can cause a micro-fracture in the glass that is not visible to the naked eye but is enough to let air and moisture through. Once that pathway opens, the unit fogs from the inside out.

Repair Versus Replacement: What Actually Works

[Foggy window repair](#) is not a single procedure. It covers three distinct approaches, and the right one depends on the window type, your budget, and your timeline.

The most thorough method is glass replacement. A technician removes the entire sash or frame, takes out the failed IGU, and installs a new sealed unit. The new unit comes with fresh desiccant, a new gas fill, and a factory seal that restores the original energy performance. This is the only option that fully restores thermal efficiency and clarity. It also preserves the existing frame and trim, so you avoid the cost and disruption of a full window replacement. Most commercial glass shops and DFW window repair specialists offer this service, and it usually comes with a window warranty that covers future seal failure for a set number of years.

The second option is condensation removal using a window defogging kit. This is a less common but valid technique for certain situations. A technician drills tiny holes in the spacer or the bottom edge of the unit, injects a cleaning solution, and uses ultrasonic cleaning to break up mineral deposits on the inner glass surfaces. Then they flush the cavity, dry it, and

reseal it with fresh desiccant and a new sealant. The result is a clear window, but the gas fill is lost, so the insulating value drops. The unit will be clearer, but it will not perform as well thermally as a new IGU. This approach works best for historic windows with custom shapes or sizes where finding a matching replacement unit is difficult or prohibitively expensive.

The third option is to do nothing or to live with the fog. Some homeowners choose this route because the window is in a low-visibility location like a basement or a garage. But foggy windows look neglected, and if the moisture is acidic or contains hard-water minerals, it can eventually pit the glass and cause permanent surface damage that requires full glass replacement anyway.



When to Call a Professional

I have seen DIY attempts at foggy window repair go badly more often than not. People buy a so-called defogging spray and a vacuum pump from an online retailer, drill into the spacer, and end up cracking the tempered glass or breaking the seal even further. Tempered glass is under internal tension, and a single misdrilled hole can cause the entire pane to shatter. That is a safety hazard and an expensive mistake.

A professional knows which windows can be defogged and which need replacement. They also carry the right sealants and desiccant for the specific spacer design. And they can test the unit for remaining gas fill and thermal performance before and after the repair. Most shops offer a free estimate, which is a practical way to find out what is possible without committing to anything.

For commercial glass installations, the stakes are higher. A storefront with foggy windows looks unprofessional and can hurt foot traffic. Commercial glass units are often larger and more expensive, so the repair-versus-replace calculation leans toward defogging when the existing frame is in good shape and the seal failure is recent.

What to Expect from a Professional Repair

When you call a DFW window repair company, the first step is an inspection. The technician checks the seal condition, measures the moisture level inside the unit, and determines whether the desiccant is saturated. They also look for cracks, chips, and frame damage. Based on that assessment, they give you a recommendation and a price.

If the choice is glass replacement, the turnaround is usually a few days. The old IGU is removed, the frame is cleaned, and a new unit is ordered to match the original dimensions and coating specifications. The installation itself takes an hour or two per window. The new unit comes with a warranty that typically covers seal failure for five to ten years, depending on the manufacturer.

If the choice is defogging and resealing, the process takes a few hours per window. The technician drills access ports, performs ultrasonic cleaning, flushes the cavity, and then seals it with a new desiccant pack and a high-quality sealant. The window will be clear, but as I mentioned, the thermal performance will be lower because the Argon gas is gone. Some companies can refill the gas after cleaning, but that adds cost and complexity, and it is not always effective if the reseal is not perfectly airtight.



Preventing Future Fogging

Once you have a clear window again, there are steps you can take to extend its life. Keep the weather seal on the outside of the frame intact and replace it if it cracks or pulls away. Check the caulking around the window edges every year and recaulk any gaps. Avoid pressure washing the windows directly, especially around the edges, because high-pressure water can force its way past the sealant. And if you are building a new home or replacing all your windows, choose IGUs with a proven warranty and a desiccant capacity matched to your climate.

Low-E coating and double-sealed spacer systems add upfront cost, but they reduce thermal stress on the seal and slow moisture infiltration. In a climate like DFW, where summer heat and

winter cold both push the limits of window materials, the extra investment pays for itself over the first seal failure that never happens.

Foggy window repair is a practical, cost-effective solution for a common problem. It does not have to mean replacing every window in the house. Whether you go with a new IGU or a professional defogging, the key is catching the failure early, before moisture damage becomes permanent.