Exterior Door Care Guide

How to Keep Your VDOM Entry Door Looking Its Best

uPVC Entry Doors *Multi-chamber laminated PVC profile*	**Aluminum Entry Doors** *Powder coat · Sublimation · Wood / MDF*

Your VDOM entry door is built to perform in all four seasons. This guide shows you exactly how to clean and maintain it — by door type and finish — so it keeps looking showroom-new for years with minimal effort.

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1. The Basics — For Every VDOM Entry Door

Whether you have a uPVC or an aluminum door, these three habits will cover most of your maintenance. Everything else in this guide builds on them.

1.1 Clean It Monthly

Outdoor doors collect pollen, road dust, insect residue, and exhaust soot faster than anything inside the house. A quick monthly clean keeps this from building into grime that needs serious scrubbing later.

- **Rinse first.** Use a garden hose on low pressure to knock off loose dust and pollen. Never use a pressure washer — even on the 'low' setting it can force water past door seals and glazing tape.
- **Wash with mild soap.** Mix 3-4 drops of dish soap in a bucket of warm water. Wipe with a soft microfiber cloth or non-abrasive sponge, working top to bottom.
- **Rinse off the soap.** Soap residue left to dry becomes a dull film that attracts more dirt. Rinse with clean water.
- **Wipe dry.** A dry microfiber cloth removes water spots and leaves the surface looking clean. On glass inserts, buff dry before the water air-dries — standing water leaves mineral deposits.

✖ **Never use these on any VDOM entry door**

Pressure washer or steam cleaner — forces water past seals.

Bleach, ammonia, or chlorine-based products (Pine-Sol, Clorox wipes, standard Windex).

All-purpose household sprays (Lysol, 409, Fantastik) — many contain solvents.

Abrasive pads, steel wool, or stiff-bristle scrub brushes.

Acetone, nail polish remover, or paint thinner.

Silicone furniture polish (Pledge) — fogs the surface and attracts dust.

1.2 A Canopy Above the Door Is Not Optional

! **Install a canopy or overhang — this is the single most effective thing you can do for your door**

A canopy projecting at least 12 inches (30 cm) beyond the door face keeps rain, snow, and direct sun off the door surface. Without one, every rain event drives water into seals and joints, and summer sun bakes finishes from the outside.

Direct afternoon sun on a dark-color door raises the surface temperature well above what any manufacturer rates their finishes for. A canopy eliminates this.

If your installation does not have a canopy, discuss adding one with your contractor. It extends the life of every component — door, frame, glass seals, hardware, and threshold — by years.

1.3 Lock, Hinges, and Threshold

- **Lock mechanism:** apply a small amount of graphite powder or PTFE dry lubricant to the keyway and bolt faces once a year. Never use WD-40 inside a lock — it attracts grit and thickens into a paste over time.
- **Hinges:** apply a drop of machine oil or PTFE spray to each hinge pivot annually. A stiff hinge puts stress on the door panel and frame at the hinge zone.
- **Threshold seal:** brush out grit trapped in the threshold brush or rubber seal with a soft brush. Grit in the seal wears it down faster than normal use.

- **Handle and hardware:** wipe with a dry or barely-damp cloth. Apply a thin coat of automotive paste wax to hardware faces twice a year — this slows tarnishing and salt deposit buildup, especially in coastal locations.
- **Weatherstripping:** inspect the perimeter seal each fall. A seal that is cracked, compressed flat, or torn allows drafts, water, and insects in. Replacement seals are available from VDOM by door model.

2. uPVC (Metal-Plastic) Entry Doors

VDOM uPVC doors use a multi-chamber steel-reinforced PVC profile as both the structural frame and the visible door surface. The profile is co-extruded or laminated with a decorative layer. Because the entire visible face is PVC, care is straightforward and the same across all colors, with one important color-specific note.

2.1 How the Surface Works

PVC profile — what you need to know

The color is either integral to the PVC compound (standard white and light colors) or applied as a factory laminate bonded under heat (dark colors: black, anthracite, dark gray, and specialty shades).

Integral-color PVC is highly resistant to cleaning agents and UV. It can be cleaned with mild soap and water without any concern about the color layer.

Laminated dark-color profiles have the same non-porous PVC face but an additional adhesive layer at edges and joints — this layer is heat-sensitive. Treat them with slightly more care in terms of heat exposure (direct afternoon sun, anything placed against the door surface).

All colors are UV-stabilized, but very dark colors absorb significantly more heat. A black or anthracite door in direct afternoon sun can reach surface temperatures that are hard to touch with a bare hand.

2.2 Cleaning Your uPVC Door

- **Monthly routine:** follow Section 1.1. uPVC is one of the easiest exterior surfaces to clean — most outdoor grime comes off with soap and water and a soft cloth.
- **Scuffs and marks:** a melamine foam eraser (Mr. Clean Magic Eraser) used lightly on the PVC surface removes most stubborn marks including rubber scuffs and hard water deposits. Use minimal pressure — test in a corner first on dark laminated surfaces.
- **Sap, adhesive, or sticker residue:** apply a small amount of vegetable oil or baby oil to the area, leave for 2-3 minutes, then wipe off with a warm soapy cloth. Rinse clean.
- **Chalky or dull white surface (oxidation):** standard white PVC that has oxidized over many years can be restored with a dedicated uPVC cleaner or a small amount of white automotive polish applied with a soft cloth, then buffed off. This is a once-every-few-years task, not routine.
- **Textured surface channels:** use a soft-bristle brush with the soapy water solution to work grime out of texture grooves. Rinse and dry — soap left in channels dries as white residue.

2.3 Color-Specific Notes

White and Light Colors

The easiest to maintain. Occasional discoloration from iron deposits (rust streaks from nails or fasteners nearby) can be removed with a diluted white vinegar solution — 50/50 with water — applied with a cloth and rinsed off. Do not let vinegar sit for more than 2-3 minutes.

Black, Anthracite, and Dark Colors (Laminated)

Dark profiles show fingerprints and water spots more visibly than light colors. After the monthly wash, a dry microfiber buff removes remaining water marks. Inspect the profile edges and corner joints each spring — the

laminate can begin to lift at these points on south-facing installations with high sun exposure. If an edge starts to lift, press it back and run a fine bead of clear UV-stable silicone along the edge immediately.

> **!** **Dark-color uPVC in direct sun — what to watch**
>
> Very dark colors (RAL 9005 Black, RAL 7016 Anthracite) absorb substantially more heat than white or light colors. On a south-facing installation without a canopy, peak summer surface temperatures on a dark door can be high enough to soften laminate edge adhesive.
>
> If your dark door is south- or west-facing, a canopy is even more important than for light-color doors.
>
> Never place anything against a dark uPVC surface in direct sun — furniture, cardboard, mats, packages. These trap heat and can leave marks or cause localized laminate softening.

Gray (All Shades)

Mid-tone grays behave similarly to light colors in terms of heat absorption. Standard cleaning applies. On textured gray profiles, light discoloration in the texture grooves is typically grime, not damage — a soft brush with soapy water removes it easily.

2.4 Glass Inserts on uPVC Doors

> ⚠ **The joint between glass and PVC frame — the most important rule**
>
> Never spray water or cleaning solution directly at the door. Always apply to the cloth first, then wipe.
>
> Never let liquid run into the joint where the glass meets the PVC frame. The glazing tape and sealant at this joint is what keeps weather out — forcing water into it under pressure or by pooling breaks down the seal over time.
>
> When wiping the glass, work from the center outward and stop before the frame edge. Wipe the frame separately.
>
> After cleaning, check the glass perimeter for any gaps in the sealant. Re-seal any gaps with a clear, neutral-cure silicone sealant rated for glazing.

- **Clear and frosted glass:** ammonia-free glass cleaner on a microfiber cloth, straight strokes, buff dry. Ammonia-free Windex or 50/50 distilled water and white vinegar both work well.
- **Decorative or tinted glass:** plain water on a soft cloth, then dry. Avoid vinegar on tinted coatings.
- **Hard water deposits:** 50/50 white vinegar and distilled water on a cloth, left on for 60 seconds, wiped and immediately dried.

uPVC Entry Doors

All colors — white, black, anthracite, gray and others

✔ DO	✖ DO NOT
✔ Monthly wash: dish soap, soft cloth, rinse, dry	✖ Use pressure washer — even low pressure damages seals
✔ Magic Eraser (lightly) for stubborn marks and scuffs	✖ Use bleach, ammonia, or chlorine cleaners
✔ Vegetable oil for sap and adhesive residue	✖ Use acetone or solvent cleaners on any surface
✔ Diluted white vinegar for rust streaks on white PVC	✖ Leave dark-color door in direct sun without a canopy
✔ Soft brush for textured surface channels	✖ Let liquid run into the glass-to-frame joint
✔ Inspect dark-color laminate edges each spring	✖ Use abrasive pads or stiff brushes on PVC or glass
✔ Apply glass cleaner to cloth only — never spray at door	✖ Apply silicone polish (Pledge) — fogs the surface
✔ Clear silicone to re-seal any glass perimeter gaps	✖ Pull lifting laminate edges — press back and seal instead

3. Aluminum Entry Doors

VDOM aluminum entry doors combine an aluminum structural frame with a door panel that may be finished in one of three ways: powder coat, sublimation (laminated metal), or a wood veneer / moisture-resistant MDF face. Each has different care requirements. Check your order confirmation or the door edge label to confirm which finish your door has.

> **!**
>
> **How to identify your aluminum door finish**
>
> Powder coat: uniform solid color, slightly textured to the touch, matte or satin sheen. The surface feels like the outside of a quality appliance.
>
> Sublimation / laminated metal: a realistic wood-grain, stone, or decorative print that looks like real texture but is smooth to the touch. Very consistent pattern across the panel.
>
> Wood veneer: visible natural wood grain that changes slightly across the panel. Warm to the touch. Edges may show the veneer thickness.
>
> Moisture-resistant MDF with foil or film: similar appearance to eco-veneer interior doors — smooth, slightly flexible surface over a rigid MDF core.

3.1 Powder Coat Finish

Powder coat is a dry paint applied electrostatically and cured under heat directly onto the aluminum frame and panel. The result is a hard, uniform, weather-resistant film — one of the most durable exterior finishes available. It resists UV fading, handles temperature extremes well, and cleans easily.

Cleaning Powder Coat

- **Routine monthly wash:** follow Section 1.1. Powder coat is the most forgiving aluminum finish to clean. Most outdoor grime releases with soap and water.
- **Pollen and road film:** these build up as a hazy layer on horizontal surfaces (top of door, window sills). The monthly rinse and wipe handles this without scrubbing.
- **Grease and fingerprints:** diluted dish soap on a cloth removes these easily. Powder coat does not absorb oils.
- **Scuffs from tools, keys, or packages:** light surface scuffs on powder coat can sometimes be reduced by rubbing gently with a small amount of automotive paste wax (e.g., Turtle Wax or Meguiar's) on a soft cloth. This fills micro-scratches slightly and restores gloss.
- **Mildew in recesses or along frame joints:** diluted white vinegar (50/50 with water) on a cloth, scrubbed gently with a soft brush, then rinsed. For heavy mildew, diluted oxygen bleach (OxiClean mixed to label strength) — test in a hidden area first, rinse completely.

What Powder Coat Cannot Handle

> **!**
>
> **Powder coat — the one thing that damages it**
>
> Deep scratches and chips that go through to bare aluminum. These must be touched up promptly to prevent the aluminum from oxidizing (turning chalky white) under the coating.
>
> Touch-up: clean and dry the area, apply a matching powder coat touch-up pen or brush-on liquid. Apply in thin coats. This is a cosmetic repair — it will not be invisible, but it stops further oxidation.
>
> Caustic (strongly alkaline or strongly acidic) cleaners strip powder coat permanently. Avoid any cleaning product that is not labeled pH-neutral or 'safe for painted aluminum'.

☐ Powder Coat Aluminum *Hard-cured electrostatically applied finish*	
✔ DO	**✖ DO NOT**
✔ Monthly wash: dish soap, microfiber cloth, rinse, dry	✖ Use pressure washer or steam cleaner
✔ Automotive paste wax to reduce light surface scuffs	✖ Use caustic or strongly alkaline cleaners
✔ White vinegar solution for mildew in frame joints	✖ Let chips or scratches sit unaddressed — oxidation follows
✔ Touch up chips promptly with matching touch-up pen	✖ Use abrasive pads or steel wool
✔ Apply glass cleaner to cloth — never spray at door	✖ Use ammonia-based cleaners near glass or hardware
✔ Automotive paste wax on hardware twice a year	✖ Use acetone or paint thinner near any surface

3.2 Sublimation / Laminated Metal Finish

Sublimation and laminated metal finishes apply a decorative print — typically realistic wood grain, concrete, stone, or solid color — directly to an aluminum panel through a heat-transfer or bonding process. The surface is completely smooth to the touch while looking highly textured, and the colors are UV-stabilized for outdoor use. This is a low-maintenance, high-appearance finish.

Cleaning Sublimation / Laminated Metal

- **Routine monthly wash:** follow Section 1.1. The non-porous metallic surface releases grime very easily. Most marks come off with plain soapy water and a soft cloth.
- **Fingerprints:** very visible on dark or gloss-finish sublimation panels. A dry microfiber cloth buffing pass after the wash removes them.
- **Hard water or mineral deposits:** 50/50 white vinegar and distilled water on a cloth, wiped on, left 30 seconds, wiped off, buffed dry. Do not let vinegar sit more than a minute.
- **Stubborn marks:** a small amount of isopropyl alcohol (70%) on a cloth, blotted on the mark, then wiped clean and dried. Test in a hidden spot first.

What Sublimation Surfaces Do Not Tolerate

!	**Sublimation / laminated finish — keep these away**
	Abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, or steel wool — the decorative print is a surface layer and scratches are immediately visible and permanent. Solvents (acetone, paint thinner, nail polish remover) — attack the print layer. Sharp objects placed or dragged against the surface — e.g., ladder feet, tools rested against the door. Always pad contact points. Never use a squeegee with a metal or hard plastic edge on this finish.

Sublimation / Laminated Metal *Heat-transfer decorative print on aluminum panel*	
✔ DO	**✖ DO NOT**
✔ Monthly wash: soap, soft microfiber, rinse, buff dry	✖ Use abrasive pads or steel wool — scratches are permanent

✔ Dry microfiber buff after washing removes fingerprints	✖ Use acetone, solvents, or nail polish remover
✔ White vinegar (50/50) for mineral deposits — max 1 min	✖ Use pressure washer or direct high-pressure hose
✔ 70% isopropyl on cloth for stubborn marks (test first)	✖ Drag or rest hard objects against the panel surface
✔ Apply glass cleaner to cloth only — never spray at door	✖ Use ammonia-based cleaners near glass inserts
✔ Pad any ladder feet or tools that contact the door	✖ Use caustic or strongly alkaline cleaning products

3.3 Wood Veneer and Moisture-Resistant MDF Finish

Some VDOM aluminum doors feature a door panel faced with real wood veneer or a moisture-resistant MDF core wrapped in a protective film. The aluminum frame handles the structural and weatherproofing role while the panel face delivers the warmth and texture of wood. Because of this split responsibility, care involves both the aluminum frame and the wood or film face — each with its own rules.

> **!**
>
> **Wood veneer and MDF panel — the most important rule**
>
> The wood face on an aluminum entry door is protected by a lacquer or UV-oil coating, but it is still real wood (or wood-based). It must be kept dry.
>
> This finish requires a canopy above the door. Without protection from direct rain contact, the veneer edge seals will fail within one or two seasons. This is not a guideline — it is a design requirement.
>
> The bottom edge of the panel is the most exposed point. Inspect it each fall. Any swelling, bubbling, or coating failure at the base must be addressed immediately.

Cleaning the Wood Veneer Face

- **Routine dusting:** dry microfiber cloth, wiped with the wood grain direction.
- **Light soil and fingerprints:** a barely-damp cloth wrung almost dry. Dry immediately afterward. Never leave moisture on the surface.
- **Stubborn grime:** a few drops of pH-neutral wood cleaner (Murphy Oil Soap diluted to 1/4 strength) on a barely-damp cloth. Wipe with the grain, rinse with a clean damp cloth, dry.
- **Never use:** pressure washers, direct hose spray, steam, abrasive pads, bleach, ammonia, or any solvent. These will strip the protective coating and expose raw wood to weather.

Cleaning the MDF / Film Face

- **Same approach as eco-veneer interior doors:** damp microfiber, mild dish soap, rinse, dry. The non-porous film surface is easy to clean.
- **Avoid edges:** the edge seals where film meets aluminum are the most vulnerable point. Do not scrub edges or apply excess water pressure there.

Annual Maintenance for Wood Veneer

UV-oiled veneer panels need re-oiling every 1-2 years — when the surface appears dry or dull in raking light. Apply a thin coat of the same oil specified for your door (hard-wax oil or a dedicated exterior wood oil — contact VDOM for the specification). Rub in with the grain, let sit 15-20 minutes, buff off all excess. Let cure 24 hours before the door gets wet.

Lacquered veneer does not need periodic re-coating under normal conditions. If the lacquer begins to show wear, fine cracks, or cloudiness, apply a compatible exterior clear lacquer by brush, one thin coat, with the grain.

!	**Glass inserts on aluminum doors — same rule as uPVC** Always apply cleaner to cloth first — never spray at the door. Keep liquid away from the glass-to-frame joint. Water forced into this joint breaks down the glazing sealant over time. Use ammonia-free glass cleaner only. Inspect the glass perimeter sealant annually. Re-seal any gaps with clear neutral-cure silicone.

Wood Veneer & MDF Panel Aluminum Door

Real wood veneer or moisture-resistant MDF with film

✔ DO	✖ DO NOT
✔ Install a canopy — required for this finish	✖ Install without a canopy or overhang
✔ Wipe with the wood grain — dry microfiber for dust	✖ Use direct hose spray, steam, or pressure washer
✔ Barely-damp cloth for marks — dry immediately	✖ Let moisture sit on veneer surface — dry immediately
✔ pH-neutral wood cleaner (diluted) for stubborn grime	✖ Use bleach, ammonia, solvents, or abrasive pads
✔ Re-oil UV-oiled veneer every 1-2 years	✖ Scrub or apply pressure at film-to-frame edge joins
✔ Inspect base edge each fall for swelling or seal failure	✖ Use petroleum-based or silicone-based wood polish
✔ Apply glass cleaner to cloth — never spray at door	✖ Ignore base edge swelling or paint failure — address fast
✔ Re-seal glass perimeter annually with neutral silicone	✖ Use ammonia-based glass cleaner near frame joints

4. Seasonal Checklist

Take 10-15 minutes at each seasonal change to run through this checklist. Catching problems early is always easier than fixing them later.

Season	What to Check and Do
Fall	Full clean of door, frame, and glass. Inspect all glass perimeter sealant — re-seal any gaps before winter rain. Check weatherstripping for cracks or flat spots; replace if needed. Touch up any chips or scratches on powder coat or aluminum frame before first freeze. Lubricate lock mechanism and hinges. Check threshold seal. For wood veneer panels, assess whether re-oiling is needed before winter.
Winter	Rinse road salt off the door and frame after salting events — salt accelerates corrosion on hardware and aluminum. Use a de-icing spray (not rock salt) if ice forms on the threshold or panel. Check that the door sweep is not displaced by ice. Do not chip ice off the door face with a scraper.
Spring	Full clean after winter grime. Inspect dark-color laminate or film edges on south/west-facing doors — any lifting found now is easier to fix than after another summer. Touch up chips found over winter. For wood veneer: check base edge carefully for any swelling or finish failure. Lubricate hinges and check hinge screw tightness after winter settling.
Summer	Rinse pollen off monthly (or more often in high-pollen areas). Check dark-color uPVC laminate and aluminum panel edges in July-August when surface temperatures are highest. Inspect the canopy or overhang for any damage that reduces its coverage. For wood veneer panels: the surface should look consistent — any gray or darkened areas indicate UV breakdown and need a maintenance coat.

5. Troubleshooting

Most problems give you early warning signs before they become expensive. Here is what to look for and what to do.

What You See	Likely Cause	What to Do
Dark-color uPVC laminate lifting at edge	Heat from direct sun softening edge adhesive	Press back immediately. Apply UV-stable clear silicone along edge. Install or extend canopy.
White chalky patches on white uPVC	Surface oxidation after years of UV exposure	Apply uPVC cleaner or white automotive polish with a soft cloth. Buff off. This restores the surface.
Water inside the door frame / on threshold	Glazing seal failure, or weatherstripping gap	Inspect glass perimeter sealant and all weatherstripping. Re-seal or replace as needed. Do not ignore — water reaching door core is expensive.
Aluminum frame developing white powder	Oxidation on exposed aluminum (paint chip or seal failure)	Clean the area, apply primer rated for aluminum, then touch up with matching powder coat paint. Address immediately — oxidation spreads.
Wood veneer panel swelling at base	Water reaching the MDF or wood core through failed base seal	This is urgent. Remove the door if possible, let dry fully, re-seal all edges with exterior-grade varnish and sealant. If swelling is significant, the panel may need replacement.

Glass shows mineral spots or white rings	Hard water dried on glass surface	Apply 50/50 white vinegar and distilled water. Let sit 1 minute, wipe, buff dry. Repeat if needed.
Glass seal cloudy or discolored at edge	Seal degradation from water infiltration or age	Re-seal the glass perimeter with clear neutral-cure silicone. If glass has fogged between panes, the insulating unit has failed and needs replacement.
Door hard to lock — key turns with difficulty	Lock mechanism needs lubrication, or misalignment	Apply graphite or PTFE lubricant to keyway. If problem persists, check door alignment — a settled frame may be putting stress on the latch bolt.
Draft or cold air around door edges	Weatherstripping compressed flat or torn	Replace weatherstripping. VDOM provides replacement seals by door model. This is a 30-minute fix that dramatically improves comfort and energy efficiency.

6. Warranty and Getting Help

VDOM Limited Warranty — what care-related issues are not covered

The VDOM warranty covers manufacturing defects in materials and workmanship.
Damage from improper cleaning, chemical contact, or impact is not covered.
Water damage from installations without a canopy or with a failed weatherseal is not covered.
Damage from power washing or high-pressure water contact is not covered.
Wood veneer and MDF panels installed without canopy protection are not covered for moisture damage.
Keep your order number. Some claims require the door model number and purchase date.

When to Call VDOM

- **You see a finish defect that appeared within 12 months of installation and is not related to cleaning or impact — this may be a warranty claim.**
- **You need a matching touch-up pen or paint code for your powder coat color.**
- **You need a replacement weatherseal or threshold specification for your door model.**
- **You are unsure whether a cleaning product is safe for your specific finish.**

Quick Reference

Safe for all VDOM entry door finishes

✔ Mild dish soap in warm water — monthly wash for all doors
✔ Soft microfiber cloth or non-abrasive sponge
✔ 50/50 white vinegar + distilled water — mineral deposits and glass
✔ Ammonia-free glass cleaner applied to cloth — glass only
✔ Automotive paste wax on hardware faces — twice a year
✔ Graphite or PTFE dry lubricant — lock mechanism, annually

Never use on any VDOM entry door

✖ Pressure washer or steam cleaner
✖ Bleach, ammonia, or chlorine-based products
✖ Acetone, nail polish remover, or paint thinner
✖ All-purpose household sprays (Lysol, 409, standard Windex)
✖ Abrasive pads, steel wool, or stiff scrub brushes
✖ Silicone furniture polish (Pledge)

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