

Home Tips Everyone Can Use

By Lou Prinzi, Professional Home Inspector

Question: I have an exterior door in my home that is difficult to open or close. When we bought the home four years ago, it worked properly and it now seems that the door is too large for the frame. What can we do to fix the problem?

Answer: Doors that drag or rub on their frames can be difficult or even impossible to open or close. When the home was built, the doors should have been installed with a uniform distance between the door and its frame, and the frame should have been a perfect rectangle.

If the door and frame were installed correctly and it no longer closes properly, then some outside force has distorted the frame. That force could be structural movement and should be determined before attempting to fix the problem.

In this situation, if structural movement is the cause of the problem, check for a diagonal crack in the wallboard radiating out of one or both of the upper corners of the door opening. Diagonal cracks are a common result of structural movement; however, if you don't see any cracks, structural movement may still be the culprit. You should have a home inspector or other qualified professional diagnose the problem. Once you have stopped or ruled out structural movement, you can proceed. In a best case scenario, you can use sandpaper over the areas of the door that rubs on the frame. If this does not resolve the problem, the door may need to be planed or the door frame may need to be reset.

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