

Tight fit?

Adjusting windows and doors in caravan holiday homes

Many BH&HPA members will be all too familiar with the routine. A caravan holiday home arrives on-site and the pre-installed double-glazed windows or doors seem a bit 'wonky'. Perhaps the French door won't open or shut properly, or maybe one of the windows won't lock.

There are several reasons why a caravan holiday home's glazed units may not fit snugly by the time it has been sited. Movement during transportation is one; movement during siting is another. More rarely, it may simply be a manufacturing fault.

However, commonly, the issue is simply down to the way a caravan holiday home has been sited. Correct siting is crucial to the correct alignment of glazed units in as much as if a caravan holiday home is not square - i.e. level across its length and breadth - then nothing is going to sit quite right.

Frankly anyone is fighting a losing battle if they try to adjust windows or doors to fit a unit that is not level. So it will be just as well to leave the adjustment tools in the toolbox and get out the spirit level instead. Establishing whether the caravan holiday home is plumb is the first step that should be carried out when windows and doors are causing problems - and this will especially be relevant where a caravan has more than one of its glazed units out-of-line.

Even where a caravan holiday home has been sited and checked as level, movement may occur afterwards as the caravan holiday home 'settles' onto its pitch. Again this type of movement can cause problems in respect of the glazed units and again, these will be remedied by the re-levelling of the caravan. BH&HPA

members are therefore advised to recheck that the caravan is level at around four weeks as a matter of course following siting - in other words, don't wait for the complaints to come in first!

Let's be clear here - if a caravan holiday home is not sited properly, no amount of hinge tweaking is going to fix the windows and doors. Correct siting is crucial.

So, assuming the caravan holiday home is sited correctly, where do you go from there?

Well, many people would start by adjusting the hinges. The hinges are the most 'tweak-able' part of a door or window to find; likewise they are the easiest and quickest things to adjust, so it may seem only sensible to give them a go in the first instance.

The problem, however, is that hinges are only meant to make minor adjustments to the fit of a window or glazed door; they are for fine-tuning and as such, are not always the answer.

More often than not a window or glazed door that will not open or close properly, or will not lock or unlock, should be adjusted via the **clamps**. In the case of a door frame, for example, if the 'diagonal' dimensions differ by more than a mere 2mm, then the frame will need adjusting following a procedure which, in the first instance, has nothing to do with the hinges at all (see opposite).

Now, you may be hearing the faint rumble of a drum roll here because as we understand it, this may be something of a revelation to most. Nigel Smailes of Ellbee, a leading industry window and door manufacturer has pointed out that many park staff are unaware of the correct way to square window and glazed door frames, hence their often unsuccessful adjustment, swiftly followed by a call to the manufacturer/distributor for an on-site visit under the warranty.

Of course it is preferable for everyone in the supply chain that parks deal with any issue on a caravan holiday home that they can realistically, successfully and easily remedy. This prevents unnecessary strain on manufacturer/distributor repair teams to meet appointments. The knock-on effect of reducing the number of such appointments would, of course, be shorter waiting times for those who require priority visits - not to mention the customer satisfaction that comes from problems being swiftly remedied. So, this just begs one question - what is the correct way to adjust windows and doors?

As the saying goes, a picture says a thousand words, so opposite, we have provided illustrations of how to find and adjust clamps on glazing units where their frames are out-of-square.

Greater detail and guidance can be found at www.ellbee.co.uk/pdf/customerserviceguide.pdf. If the window or door is not made by Ellbee, the configuration may differ slightly but similar principles will apply.

BH&HPA members are further advised that it would be sensible to check doors and windows from time-to-time as a matter of course and if necessary, to make adjustments, to ensure that they continue to operate correctly.

Finally, in some situations, it might simply be that a window or door still doesn't sit straight. At this point, having eliminated all other possibilities, it might be the case that the glazed unit has not been manufactured square into the caravan holiday home. This then becomes a warranty issue, and certainly professional advice is needed, so the park should refer to the manufacturer or distributor from whom they purchased the unit.

How to square a door/window frame

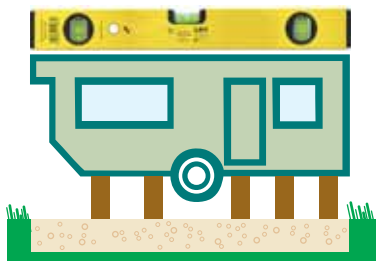
Taken from the Ellbee troubleshooting guide

If the door/window frame is not square, follow the instructions below

Prior to making any adjustments, check to see if the caravan holiday home is level and the door/window frame is square.

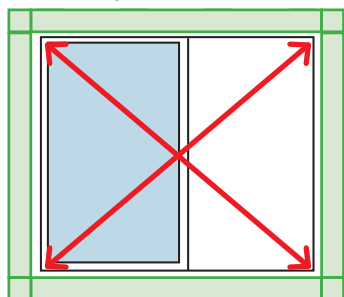
STEP 1

Check that the caravan holiday home is level and rectify if necessary.



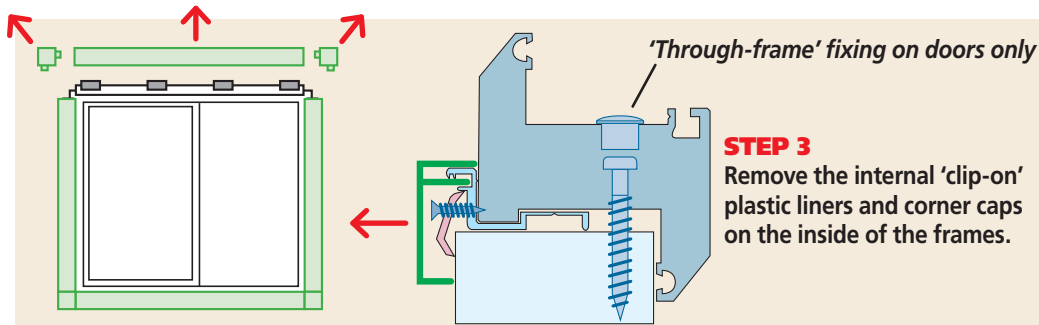
STEP 2

Check that the frame is square.



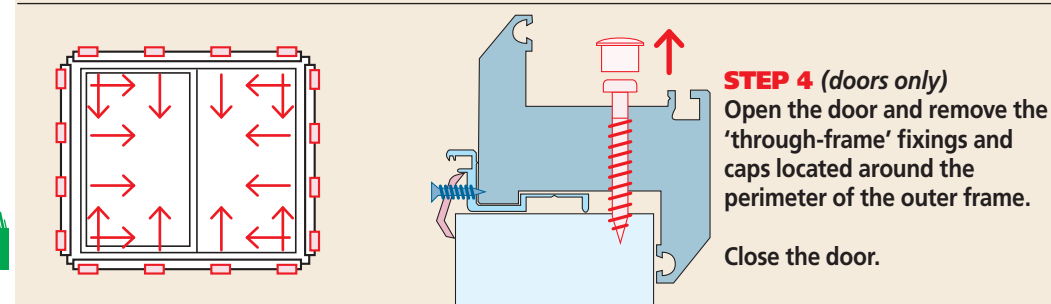
Measure the frame diagonals, noting the measurements. If these dimensions differ by 2mm or more, the frame is 'out-of-square' and needs adjusting - follow steps 3 to 8.

Once the door/window frame is square on the levelled caravan holiday home, check the operation. If the door/window still does not operate correctly, it may be necessary to then adjust one or a combination of: the hinges, lock and keep, roller keep, locking cam or shoot bolts. For further information on making such adjustments, BH&HPA members should visit: www.ellbee.co.uk/pdf/customerserviceguide.pdf.



STEP 3

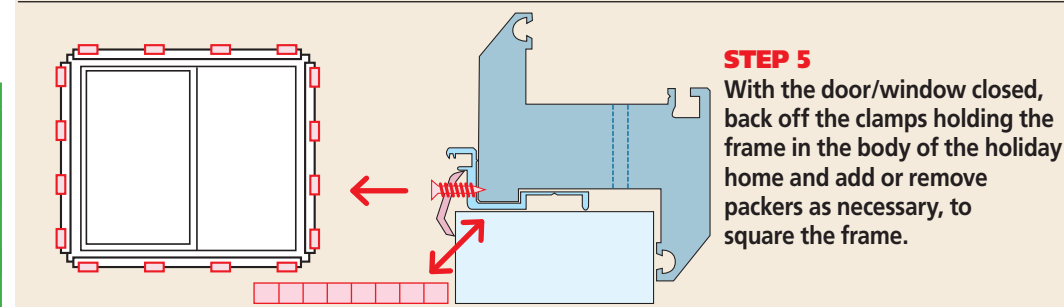
Remove the internal 'clip-on' plastic liners and corner caps on the inside of the frames.



STEP 4 (doors only)

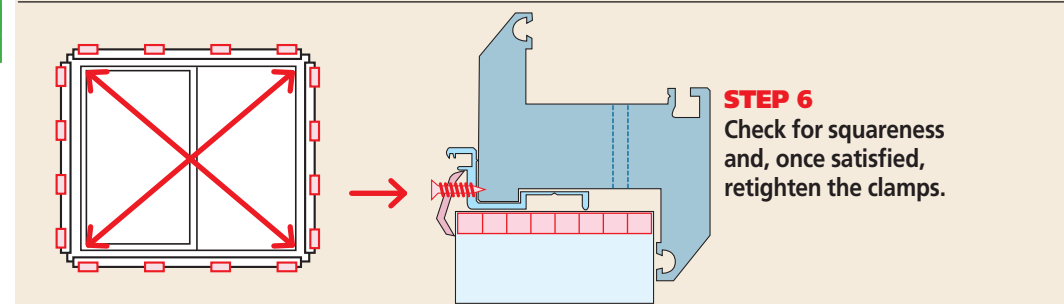
Open the door and remove the 'through-frame' fixings and caps located around the perimeter of the outer frame.

Close the door.



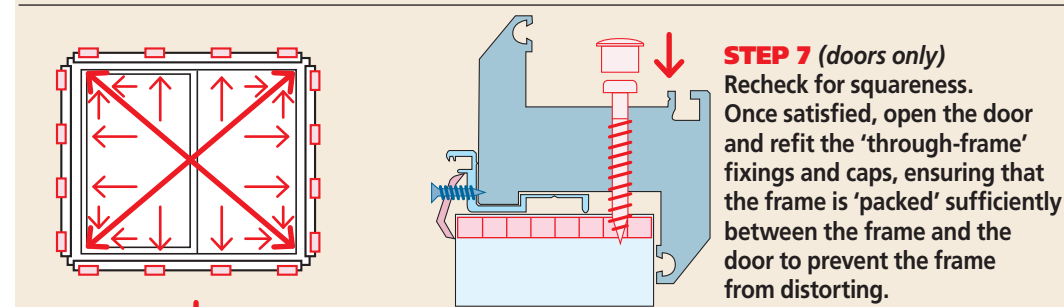
STEP 5

With the door/window closed, back off the clamps holding the frame in the body of the holiday home and add or remove packers as necessary, to square the frame.



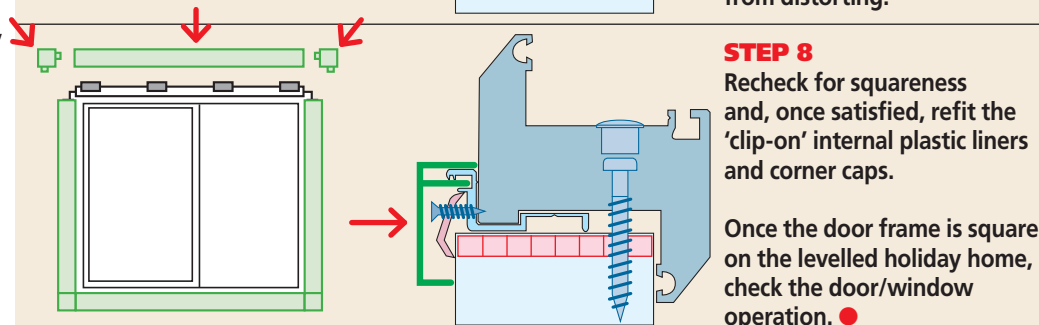
STEP 6

Check for squareness and, once satisfied, retighten the clamps.



STEP 7 (doors only)

Recheck for squareness. Once satisfied, open the door and refit the 'through-frame' fixings and caps, ensuring that the frame is 'packed' sufficiently between the frame and the door to prevent the frame from distorting.



STEP 8

Recheck for squareness and, once satisfied, refit the 'clip-on' internal plastic liners and corner caps.

Once the door frame is square on the levelled holiday home, check the door/window operation. ●