

Lock Maintenance A Must

Category: Information

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It's a familiar story. Whenever I do lock repairs I often here the same comments from homeowners, "I've been meaning to get my lock fixed for ages" or "I don't know why I didn't call you sooner" In most cases living with a sticky lock or a door you need to throw a hip check into before locking or opening is more of an inconvenience than a security risk.

So what do you the homeowner look for when assessing your locks future? You can start by opening your front door and looking at its edge where the deadlocking bolt (throw) is located. The throw should be level with the edge of the door. If it looks like it's recessed at all, it's more than likely broken!

Neglecting to repair or replace the bolt will eventually result in the throw jamming between the door and frame causing the lock to fail. This could put the homeowner in a "locked out" situation if the problem door is the only access into their home.

Another common problem involves the "strike plate". This is the metal plate that's screwed into the frame side of the door. The throw fits inside this plate when in the locked position. If you find your deadbolt is hard to lock or open, it could be because the door has dropped and the throw is rubbing against the bottom of this plate. Before you start filing or adjusting the plate, make sure you first check the door hinges.

Often the hinge screws become loose and cause the door to drop. You may only need to tighten the screws on the hinges to correct this problem however adding one or two 3" screws to each hinge will offer a more permanent fix.

Because we live close to the water, there's a lot of salt in the air. Salt attracts water. So the combination of salt, water and oxygen increases the waters ability to carry electrons which cause corrosion. Once corrosion sets in, your key may not slide into the lock cylinder easily.

So if you curse every time you lock or unlock the door because you have to push hard while wiggling the key back and forth, here's a tip. Go to your local hardware store, purchase a can of WD40 and spray a generous portion into the keyway. Contrary to what some say, WD40 works well in locks to help free up the moving parts.

Another common complaint is, "My keys don't work well in the lock, I have to lift up on the key and turn at the same time to engage the lock. This problem stems from a pinning problem inside the lock cylinder. The pins determine what key operates the lock.

Pins that are too long make the lock stiff to open or close whereas pins that are too short feel like the key is catching on something inside the lock.

To correct this problem you must re-pin your lock. To do this you may either take the lock to your local locksmith or pay the service call and have the locksmith come to your home .No matter what decision you make, I can assure you a little preventive maintenance will reward you with many years of smooth operating locks.