

Preventative Lockset Maintenance Guide

This guide is designed to help customers, building managers, installers, and end users maintain their locksets properly, so they continue to operate smoothly and securely. Regular maintenance helps prevent issues such as difficulty operating, misalignment, and premature wear, and ensures the lockset continues to operate as per its intended function.

General Information

Door locks are mechanical, or electromechanical, devices that function best when maintained. The environment and daily use can gradually affect performance. Performing simple maintenance steps reduces the risk of premature lock failure and helps maintain consistent operation.

Lock performance also depends on proper door and frame alignment. Over time, buildings settle, hardware loosens, and doors may shift. When the latch does not meet the strike plate correctly, this can lead to increased wear on both the lock and the door.

Maintenance Checks

- Make sure the door opens and closes smoothly without rubbing or resistance.
- Check for an even gap of at least 1/16" around the edges (1/8" is considered the industry standard).
- Confirm that the latch fully enters the strike plate when the door is closed.
- Verify that all screws and hardware components are firmly installed and not interfering with lock movement.
- Check the lock function by ensuring latch or bolt retraction, key operation, and latching or locking are smooth and free of excessive resistance.

Maintenance Frequency

Locksets should be inspected and maintained at least once per year. However, several factors may require more frequent maintenance, including:

- High traffic or frequently used doors.
- Exterior doors exposed to harsh weather conditions.
- Environments with airborne dust, debris, or moisture.
- Door and frame construction: thin or non-reinforced doors.
- Drive-in latch type (round latch body with no faceplate).

If any looseness or "play" is noticed in the lockset, maintenance should be performed as soon as possible. Continued use in this condition may lead to internal damage, compromised performance, or premature failure of the lockset, as well as damage to the door and frame.

Applicable Lockset Types

- Residential locksets and leversets.
- Commercial locksets.
- Interconnected locks.
- Mechanical digital locks.
- Handleset locks.
- Deadbolts.

- Mortise Locksets.
- Electronic locks and deadbolts.

References

Refer to the appropriate installation instructions for [Residential Locks](#), and [Commercial Locks](#), confirming the appropriate [lock functions](#).

Maintenance Steps

- Remove the lockset from the door. If needed, remove the strike plate from the frame.
- Clean all components using a can of compressed air to remove dust and debris.
- Apply a silicone-based product to the moving parts. Avoid oil-based lubricants as they can trap dust and debris, resulting in buildup that interferes with operation.
- Reinstall the lockset carefully, following the product's installation instruction ensuring all parts are properly aligned.
- Tighten all screws and hardware using hand tools.
- Test the lock several times to confirm proper operation as per its intended function.

Keyed Cylinder Maintenance

If the key becomes difficult to turn, debris may be present inside the cylinder's keyway. For locks exposed to cold weather or outdoor conditions, lubrication may be required more often. Use compressed air to clear the cylinder, then apply a small amount of graphite powder or silicone-based lubricant. These lubricants help internal pins move freely without attracting dirt.

Do not use oil-based lubricants or penetrating oils inside the keyed cylinder. Oil can attract dirt and debris, causing buildup that may gum up the internal components and impair the proper operation of the cylinder.

Keys should always be inserted and withdrawn smoothly—replace any bent or worn keys.

Testing the Lockset

- Confirm that the door closes securely and the latch fully engages the strike plate.
- Test the key to ensure it rotates smoothly.
- If the problem persists, call a professional locksmith, as continued operation of the lock in this condition will damage the lock, frame and door.

Cleaning the Lockset

Surface finishes such as chrome, clear coated, satin nickel, powder coated, and antique brass should be cleaned regularly using a soft cloth and a mild soap and water solution. Rinse with clean water and dry immediately. Avoid abrasive cloths or cleaners, as they can damage the finish.

For stainless steel hardware, refer to the [DOREX Stainless Steel Care & Maintenance Guide](#).

When cleaning, ensure that no liquids or cleaning solutions enter the cylinder plug, as this may impact the internal components.