

Window Repairs & Maintenance

The problems:

Are your living room windows showing their age? Are the clutch shoes broken (the little plastic block things attached to the springs that the window pins slip into)? Are the springs broken or missing? Are the jam liners (plastic tracks the window sashes slide in) cracked or covered with paint so the windows are hard to remove and insert and don't slide properly? Well we have done some homework and have some answers for questions you might have concerning repair and maintenance of these windows.

Where they came from:

The living room windows were installed around 15 years ago. I don't know what the life expectancy of a window is 30, 40 or maybe 50 years so I guess in some instances 15 could be considered approaching middle age. Age is not the major factor to blame for most of the window ills though, misuse, abuse and lack of maintenance are the main causes.

These windows came from Casco Industries of South Elgin, Illinois but the window units were actually manufactured by Lincoln Wood Products of Merrill Wisconsin.

I was recently on a trip and noticed my route took me right through Merrill so I made a stop at Lincoln to see if I could get some information about our windows and find a source for parts.

As it turns out Lincoln sells only to dealers and service providers so retail customers (you and me) cannot buy from them we must buy from a dealer or service provider. There are several dealers and service providers in our area and contact information appears for those nearby at the end of this article.

About Balances:

What I discovered is the windows we have come with spring balances, the windows (sashes) are held up by springs. Since then Lincoln has changed to a new balance system referred to as balance tubes.

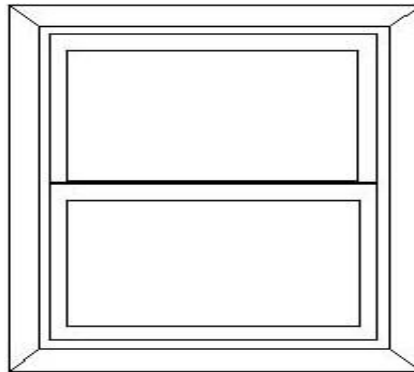
The parts of the balance tubes are completely different than the parts of the spring balances so you can't interchange parts between the spring balances and balance tubes. Lincoln still has the clutch shoes for the spring balances so if this part is broken on your windows you can get this part. If the springs or spring hook need replacing, you cannot get replacement parts but you can retrofit the spring balances with the newer balance tubes. If you opt for the balance tubes you also need

to order "tilt pins" (the little metal pins on the sides of the sashes) because the spring balance tilt pins are round and the balance tube tilt pins are triangular.

About Jam Liners:

One big problem with the jam liners is that someone has painted them. Once the liner is painted, the window will not slide properly because of the layer of paint between the window sash edge and the jam liner.

You should never paint the liner or the edges of the window sash that slide against the liners.



Removing Paint from Jam Liners:

If it's too late, i.e. they are already painted you should remove the paint. Scrape as much of it off as possible, I like to use an old (dull) 1" chisel as a scraper.

Once you have as much paint off as reasonably possible you might want to turn to chemical means to remove the remainder. If the paint is "latex" (water) based you can use alcohol and rags to remove the rest. If the paint is "oil" based you will have to use a paint remover. Check the warnings on the can to make sure the remover will not damage the plastic liners, the remover could deform the plastic or leave it soft and sticky. Once all the paint is removed you need to address the edges of the window sashes, use the same techniques you used on the liners to remove any paint on the edges of the sashes.

Wax them:

Once the sashes are cleaned up, take a wax candle and wax the edges of the sashes by rubbing the candle along the edges. The wax will make the sash slide easier in the jam liners and also will help prevent paint from sticking to the sash edges.

Removing Jam Liners:

Cleaning the jam liners can be simplified by

removing the jam liners from the jams.

Removing the jam liners is relatively simple as the liners have a flange on either side that just slips into a groove cut into the wooden stops (the wood strips running along either side of the liners). To remove the jam liners, remove the windows then use a putty knife to pry (compress) the top of the jam liner away from the outside stop. Once the flange is out of the groove at the top you can use your fingers to compress the liner to remove the flange from the groove working your way down the liner. You may find foam insulation that is attached at the bottom of the jam, just use a utility knife to cut this.

If the jam liners are cracked, deformed or just too gunked up to get cleaned up, jam liners are still available and as mentioned above they will come with balance tubes.

Check online:

This newsletter will be available on the website for future reference.

All this window business is complicated by the fact that most of us are not familiar with window construction and there are a multitude of parts to a window with unfamiliar names.

Space doesn't allow us to include all the window information in this newsletter so we will try to address this problem by putting up a glossary of window terms, a brief discussion of window anatomy and detailed instructions with pictures for window maintenance procedures on the Hanover Square website.

Service Providers:

Authorized Factory Service
705 N. Addison Rd, Villa Park, IL 60181
630-834-6474

Dealers:

Casco Industries
540 W. Division St., So. Elgin, IL 60177
847-741-9595

Manufacturer:

Lincoln Wood Products Inc.
1400 W. Taylor, Merrill, WI 54452
715-536-2461

www.lincolnwindows.com

Larry M. Adrian

Final Thought:

Always saddle your own horse.

-- Advice from a cowgirl