Why Exterior Doors Start Leaking Air

Drafts around an exterior door usually mean one of three things, the threshold is worn, the weatherstripping is tired, or the door slab has shifted enough that the gaps are no longer even.

Around Fort Worth, temperature changes and foundation movement are a common combination, and they can turn a door that used to close cleanly into one that leaks air at the corners, bottom edge, or strike side.

A lot of homeowners assume they need a new door right away, but many draft complaints come from small failures that can be corrected without major work.

Find The Real Source Of The Draft

Start by closing the door on a bright day and looking for daylight around the edges. If you can see light, air is getting in. After that, run your hand slowly around the frame, especially near the latch side, the top corner, and the threshold.

A thin strip of paper or a dollar bill can help test compression. Slide it into the closed door at different points. If it moves too easily at the top but not the bottom, or vice versa, the door is not sealing evenly.

Bottom-edge leaks are common because that area sees the most wear. If the sweep is flattened or the threshold is no longer making even contact, outside air will come right through.

If the problem showed up after a season of dry heat or after a storm, check whether the slab has shifted. In many Fort Worth neighborhoods, expansive clay soil can move just enough to change door alignment. That does not always mean severe damage, but it does mean the frame may need adjustment before new seals will hold properly.

Fix The Usual Culprits First

Start with weatherstripping. It is one of the cheapest fixes and often the most effective. Old foam strips flatten out, and brittle vinyl cracks. Replacing them with the right profile for your door can restore a tight seal without changing the door itself.

Next, inspect the sweep or door bottom. On many exterior doors, especially older ones, a new sweep does more for comfort than homeowners expect. It blocks wind, dust, and a surprising amount of sound from the street.

Caulk matters too, but only in the right places. Use it where the exterior trim meets the wall and where gaps have opened around the casing. Do not caulk moving parts or the bottom where drainage is needed. Sealing the wrong spot can trap water and create a bigger repair later.

An experienced company can confirm the cause with a quick inspection.

If hinges are loose, tighten them and look for stripped screws. In some cases, swapping in longer screws on the hinge side can help pull the frame back into better alignment. That is a small adjustment, but it can close a gap that has been leaking air for months.

When A Door Needs More Than A Repair

When the usual fixes do not hold, the issue may be beyond simple maintenance. A warped slab, damaged frame, or persistent alignment problem can keep the door from sealing properly.

If the lock no longer lines up, the door rubs when opening, or you can see daylight in more than one spot, the unit may no longer be serviceable as a simple repair project.

A new exterior door can also improve comfort if the old one was simply built poorly for North Texas weather. Better insulation, tighter seals, and a properly fitted frame can reduce drafts, but the installation has to be done carefully. Even a good door will leak if it is hung out of square or sealed sloppily around the jamb.

Maintenance That Actually Helps

The best way to keep a door draft-free is not complicated. Catch worn seals early, keep hardware tight, and replace damaged parts before they start affecting the whole frame.

Routine cleaning helps more than many people realize. Dirt packed into the threshold can stop the door from closing fully, which leaves a gap that acts like a draft.

Older homes deserve a Fort Worth Window and Door Solutions 817-646-9528 closer look because they are more likely to shift over time. After heavy rain or long dry stretches, a door that was fine last month may need a small adjustment now.