Pease Doors
The Door Store

INSTALLATION GUIDE

Sidelite Panel Replacement

Replace a damaged or outdated sidelite panel in an existing door system — reusing your existing frame, mull post, and threshold.

APPLIES TO
Pease Entry Door Sidelites

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner / Intermediate

TIME
2–4 Hours

What’s Inside

This guide walks you through replacing a sidelite panel in an existing door system — the frame, mull post, threshold, and adapter all stay in place. You’re only swapping the panel itself. It’s the easiest way to refresh a damaged sidelite or upgrade the look of your entry without rebuilding the whole system.

IF ONLY THE GLASS INSERT OR ITS PLASTIC FRAMES ARE DAMAGED

If your sidelite has a separate glass insert (decorative glass in plastic or wood frames) and only the insert or frames are damaged — not the panel itself — you don’t need this guide. Replacing just the insert and frames is a much simpler repair. Call us at **1-513-871-8907** for a replacement insert or frame kit.

Before You Start

A sidelite panel replacement reuses everything around the panel — frame, mull post, threshold, sidelite adapter, and stop trim all stay in place. You're only swapping the panel itself.

WHEN PANEL REPLACEMENT IS THE RIGHT FIX

- **Damaged or broken panel**
  The panel itself is cracked, water-damaged, rotted, or the flush-glazed glass is broken. Replacing the whole panel is faster than trying to repair the frame around the glass.
- **Style upgrade**
  You're refreshing the look of your entry — matching a new door, switching to decorative glass, or moving from clear glass to privacy glass. The frame around the panel can stay; only the panel changes.

INSPECTION BEFORE YOU BUY A REPLACEMENT PANEL

Issues with the surrounding frame, mull post, or adapter need to be resolved before a new panel goes in — especially if the old panel cracked from impact or water intrusion.

INSPECT	WHAT TO LOOK FOR
Mull post (door-side jamb)	If the panel cracked from impact, the mull post may be cracked too. Check from inside and outside.
Outer leg jamb	Same check on the opposite side of the panel — look for cracks, splits, or visible damage.
Sidelite adapter (bottom)	The wood or plastic strip the panel sits on. Look for water damage or rot. Replace it before installing the new panel if soft or visibly rotted.
Threshold under the panel	Look for water damage, rot, or seal failure. Wet rot here means water has been getting behind the old panel — fix the cause (usually a failed caulk seal) before reinstalling.
Head jamb above the panel	Look for water staining or rot at the top. Less common but happens if the upper caulk seal failed.
Stop trim (interior side)	Will come off during removal — confirm intact and reusable. Cracked or split trim needs to be replaced.

IF THE FRAME IS DAMAGED, THIS ISN'T THE RIGHT GUIDE

If the mull post, outer leg jamb, threshold, or sidelite adapter is damaged beyond minor repair, replacing just the panel won't solve the problem. Call us at **1-513-871-8907** — you'll likely need a full sidelite system replacement rather than a panel swap.

Verify Your New Panel

Before you start removing the old panel, confirm the new panel matches your existing opening. Returning a sidelite panel after it's been trimmed or installed isn't practical — take an extra five minutes here to save yourself a trip.

MEASURE THE EXISTING PANEL

Measure the existing panel *in place* if possible (interior face, between the rabbets where the stop trim sits) for these dimensions:

- **Width**
  Measure between the mull post and outer leg jamb at three points: top, middle, bottom. The new panel should match the smallest of these measurements minus 1/4" (1/8" gap on each side for thermal movement).
- **Height**
  Measure from the top of the sidelite adapter to the bottom of the head jamb. The new panel should match this dimension minus 1/4" (1/8" clearance top, 1/8" at the adapter).
- **Thickness**
  Measure across the panel face, including any flush-glazed glass or insert. Sidelite panels are typically 1-3/8" or 1-3/4" thick — the new panel must match the existing rabbet depth in your jambs, otherwise the stop trim won't sit flush.

CONFIRM THE PANEL YOU RECEIVED

- ☐ New sidelite panel (matches existing dimensions)
- ☐ Glass insert and frames (if applicable, may ship separately)
- ☐ Replacement stop trim (only if your existing stop trim is damaged)
- ☐ Exterior caulk — silicone or polyurethane (provided by installer)
- ☐ Interior caulk — paintable acrylic-latex (provided by installer)
- ☐ Exterior primer & paint (matched to your existing finish)
- ☐ Finish nails or pin nails (provided by installer; matches existing fasteners)

IF ANYTHING DOESN'T MATCH, STOP HERE

If the panel you received doesn't match your measurements within reasonable trim tolerances (1/8" or so), don't cut it down to fit — the panel may be the wrong product or a manufacturing error. Call us at **1-513-871-8907** with the dimensions and we'll help confirm the right replacement.

Tools & Materials

Most of these tools are standard household DIY items. The pin nailer is optional — a hammer and finish nails work fine if you don't have one.

ESSENTIAL TOOLS

- ☐ Sharp utility knife (for scoring paint and caulk seals)
- ☐ Stiff-blade putty knife (for prying stop trim free)
- ☐ Flat pry bar (for stubborn stop trim)
- ☐ Hammer & nail set
- ☐ Caulk gun
- ☐ Tape measure
- ☐ Pencil
- ☐ Safety glasses & work gloves

ALSO HELPFUL TO HAVE ON HAND

- ☐ Pneumatic pin nailer with 1" pins (faster than hand-nailing stop trim)
- ☐ Circular saw with fine-tooth blade (only if trimming the panel to fit)
- ☐ Block plane or hand plane (for fine-fitting the panel width)
- ☐ Sandpaper (120/180 grit)
- ☐ Painter's tape
- ☐ Drop cloth (for paint catch)
- ☐ Helper (panels are awkward to lift solo)

MATERIALS

- ☐ **Exterior caulk** — high-quality silicone or polyurethane (white or color-matched)
- ☐ **Interior caulk** — paintable acrylic-latex (gets primed and painted with the trim)
- ☐ Exterior-grade primer (for sealing the four edges of the new panel)
- ☐ Exterior-grade paint or stain (matched to your existing finish)
- ☐ 4d finish nails (1-1/2") or 1" pin nails for stop trim
- ☐ Wood filler (for old nail holes in stop trim, if reusing)

TWO CAULKS, THREE JOBS

You'll use two different caulks for three separate beads. **Exterior silicone or polyurethane** goes in the rabbets before the panel is set (the weather seal that locks out wind-driven rain). **Paintable acrylic-latex** gets used twice on the interior: once at the panel-jamb seam *before* the stop trim is reinstalled (the hidden air seal), and once along the stop-trim perimeter *after* install (cosmetic finish). Don't use silicone on the interior — paint won't stick to it.

Remove the Old Sidelite Panel

The old panel comes out in three stages: free the interior stop trim, cut the exterior caulk seal, then tap the panel out from inside. Take it slow on the stop trim — you'll reuse it when you install the new panel.

1

Score the paint along the interior stop trim

From inside the house, run a sharp utility knife along both edges of each piece of stop trim: where the stop meets the jamb, and where the stop meets the panel face. Years of paint can essentially weld the stop to the jamb — if you don't score the paint first, you'll tear the jamb finish when you pry the stop off.

2

Pry the stop trim free

Slide a stiff-blade putty knife into the scored line between the stop and the jamb. Work it gently back and forth until you can fit a flat pry bar behind it. Lever the bar against the jamb (not the panel — prying against glass can crack it) and gradually work the stop free. The stop is held by small finish nails or brads roughly every 8–12 inches — you'll feel resistance at each nail. Pry slowly, working from one nail to the next, so you don't snap the stop. Set the freed stop aside in order — label each piece (top, lock side, hinge side, bottom) so you reinstall them where they came from. Save the original stop trim if you can: it's usually paint-matched to your interior trim and may be a discontinued profile, so reusing it saves a paint-matching project. If a piece breaks, measure the profile and bring a piece to your hardware store, or call us for a replacement.

3

Pull old nails from the stop trim

With the stop trim free, you'll see old finish nails or brads protruding from the back. Pull them out from the back side with pliers (pulling from the front would tear the painted face). Fill the holes with wood filler if you plan to reuse the trim with a clean finish.

4

Cut the exterior caulk seal

Move outside. Run the utility knife along the entire perimeter where the panel meets the jambs and adapter — top, both sides, bottom. Old exterior caulk forms a strong bond between the panel and the frame; cutting it cleanly is the difference between a panel that taps free easily and one that fights you all day. Make multiple light passes if the caulk is thick.

5

Tap the panel free from outside

From the exterior, place your palm or fist against the wood frame of the panel (not the glass) and tap firmly. The panel should rock loose from its rabbets. If it doesn't move, you have caulk holding somewhere — check the perimeter again with the utility knife. Once the panel rocks free, push it inward toward the inside of the house.

6

Lift the panel out (with a helper)

From inside, have a helper support the panel as you push it the rest of the way through. Lift it out of the opening and set it aside. Sidelite panels are awkward more than heavy — a helper makes this much easier and prevents the panel from twisting and cracking the glass on the way out.

Inspect & Prep the Opening

With the panel out, you have clear access to the rabbets, adapter, and surrounding frame. Spend a few minutes here — problems are much easier to fix now than after the new panel is in place.

1

Clean the rabbets and adapter

Scrape old caulk residue out of the rabbets where the stop trim seats and where the panel meets the jambs. A stiff plastic scraper or putty knife works well — don't gouge the wood. Vacuum debris out of the opening. The rabbets need to be clean for the new caulk to seal properly.

2

Inspect the sidelite adapter

Check the wood or plastic adapter at the bottom of the opening. Press on it to feel for soft spots (rot) or movement (loose attachment). If the adapter is damaged, replace it now — lift it out, run a fresh bead of exterior caulk along the threshold, set the new adapter in, and let the caulk skin over before continuing.

3

Inspect the surrounding frame

Look closely at the mull post, outer leg jamb, head jamb, and threshold for cracks, rot, or water damage. If the old panel cracked from impact, also check the inside corners of the rabbets where the new panel will seat — a hairline crack here will let water through and cause the new panel to fail.

4

Touch up paint or sealer if needed

If the rabbets or surrounding wood is bare from scraping, brush a coat of exterior primer or sealer onto the bare wood now. Sealing the wood before installing the new panel protects against future water intrusion.

THIS IS THE MOISTURE-PROTECTION STEP

Most sidelite failures come from water getting behind the panel and rotting the frame. With the panel out, this is your one chance to inspect and seal the wood before another decade of weather. Don't rush this — a coat of primer or sealer on any bare wood now will pay back many times over.

Fit the New Panel

If you ordered a panel sized to your opening, this section is mostly a dry-fit check, any needed trimming, and a primer/first-coat pass before install. If your panel needs to be trimmed to fit, do that work now — not after caulk is on the opening.

1

Dry-fit the new panel

With a helper, lift the new panel into the opening (no caulk yet). It should sit fully on the adapter, with the top clearing the head jamb by about 1/8" and 1/16–1/8" gaps on each side. Check that the stop trim will sit flush against the panel face when reinstalled — if the panel is too thin or thick, the stop won't fit right. Take the panel back out.

2

Trim the panel to fit (if needed)

Trimming guidance depends on what your panel is made of. **Wood panels:** trim freely — use a circular saw with a sharp fine-tooth blade for length cuts (the bottom edge), and a block plane or hand plane to shave the width on the side edges. Sand cut edges smooth with 120/180 grit. **Fiberglass panels:** most can be trimmed an inch or so on the bottom only — trimming the sides isn't recommended and may void the warranty. Check your specific product page for details. **Steel panels:** generally should not be trimmed. If your steel panel has a wood edge, you can sand or trim a very small amount (about 1/8") off each edge, but no more. Don't trim more than 1/4" total off any one edge of any panel — if you need more than that, the panel was probably the wrong size.

3

Prime and pre-finish the panel

The edges of the panel must be primed and painted before installation — they're inaccessible once the panel is in place, and unsealed edges are the #1 cause of premature sidelite failure. Brush a coat of exterior-grade primer onto all four edges (top, bottom, both sides), then a first coat of finish paint or stain on those edges. **For the panel faces, a first coat before installation is recommended but not required.** Pre-painting the visible faces protects them during install and gives a more uniform final finish; you'll apply a final coat after installation to cover any handling marks, nail holes, and caulk seams. If you'd rather paint everything after install, that's fine for the faces — but the edges still get primed and painted now.

DON'T SKIP THE EDGE SEALING STEP

If you take only one piece of advice from this guide, take this one: **prime and paint all four edges of the panel before installation**. The factory finish on the panel faces protects the front and back, but the edges are bare and become inaccessible once the panel is in place. Unsealed edges are the #1 cause of premature sidelite failure. Pre-finishing the faces is also recommended — a first coat before install plus a final coat after gives the most durable result.

Install the New Panel

With the panel sealed and the opening prepped, installation goes quickly. The seal is built from two sides: an exterior weather seal that locks out wind-driven rain, and an interior air seal that lives behind the stop trim. Both matter — don't skip the interior bead even though it'll be hidden.

1

Apply exterior caulk to the opening

From outside, run a continuous bead of **exterior-grade silicone or polyurethane caulk** around all four sides of the opening — inside the rabbets where the panel will seat. The bead should be about 1/4" thick. Pay extra attention to the bottom bead where the panel meets the adapter — this is where wind-driven rain tries hardest to get in.

2

Press the new panel into place

With a helper, lift the panel into the opening from the inside (or outside, depending on which direction the rabbet opens — most Pease panels install from the exterior). Press it firmly into the wet caulk so the caulk squeezes out slightly along all four edges. The panel should sit flush against the rabbets on all sides, fully seated on the adapter at the bottom. **Have your helper hold the panel firmly against all four rabbets for at least a minute** while you work around the perimeter checking for full contact — gaps in this seal will let water in. Wipe excess caulk from the exterior face with a damp rag before it skins over.

3

Run an interior air-seal bead at the panel-jamb seam

Move back inside. **Before you reinstall the stop trim,** run a thin bead of **paintable acrylic-latex caulk** along the seam where the back of the panel meets the interior face of each jamb — top, both sides, and bottom. This is an air seal, not a weather seal: the exterior bead in Step 1 keeps water out; this interior bead keeps conditioned air in. Once the stop trim covers it, this seam is hidden — so you only get one chance to do it right. Use acrylic-latex (not silicone) so the bead bonds to wood, accepts paint, and stays flexible behind the trim.

4

Reinstall the original stop trim

Take the stop trim pieces you saved from removal and reinstall them in their original positions, pressing each piece tight against the panel face. The interior caulk bead from the previous step will compress slightly under the trim — that's what you want. Nail the trim to the jamb with **4d finish nails** (or 1" pins if you have a pin nailer). Place the first nail 4–6 inches from each end (not at the very end — nailing too close to an end will split the trim), then space remaining nails roughly every 8–12 inches. Set finish nail heads slightly below the surface with a nail set.

5

Caulk the stop-trim perimeter (cosmetic)

Run a final bead of **paintable acrylic-latex caulk** along the seam where the stop trim meets the jamb and where the stop trim meets the panel face. Smooth the bead with a wet finger or a caulk-smoothing tool. This bead is cosmetic and gives a clean paint line — the actual air seal is the bead you ran in Step 3.

Finish

Finishing isn’t cosmetic — it’s weather protection. The factory finish on the panel faces is durable, but the freshly installed seams, nail heads, and any trimmed edges all need to be primed and painted before they see weather.

1

Fill nail holes and let cure

From inside, fill each finish nail hole in the stop trim with paintable wood filler. Let it dry per the product instructions, then sand smooth with 180-grit sandpaper. If you used a pin nailer with 1" pins, the holes are small enough that the cosmetic caulk in Step 5 of Section 7 may have already filled them.

2

Prime and paint the interior

Brush exterior-grade primer onto the new stop trim, the interior caulk seam, and any filled nail holes. Once the primer is dry, apply two coats of paint matched to your existing interior trim. Take care not to get paint on the panel face if it has a different finish.

3

Prime and paint the exterior

Move outside. Touch up any bare wood, the new caulk seam (if your caulk is paintable — silicone is not, polyurethane usually is), and any small chips with primer first. Apply two coats of exterior paint or stain matched to your existing exterior finish. The factory finish on the panel face usually doesn’t need a fresh coat unless it’s scratched or you’re changing colors.

WHY FINISH MATTERS

An unfinished or under-finished sidelite panel will fail. Wood absorbs moisture through any unprotected surface — nail holes, caulk seams, trimmed edges — and that moisture leads to swelling, warping, and rot. The factory faces are pre-finished, but your installation work is fresh wood until you prime and paint it. Don’t skip this step.

Troubleshooting

Common issues during sidelite panel replacement and how to fix them.

- **Stop trim breaks while prying it free**

  Stop trim is typically thin pine and can split if pried too hard or too fast. If it breaks, measure the broken piece (length and profile) and either order replacement trim from us or take a sample to your local hardware store to match. To prevent breaks on the remaining pieces, score the paint deeper before prying, work the putty knife in slowly, and pry against the jamb rather than the panel side.

- **Old caulk won't cut cleanly with a utility knife**

  Old silicone caulk is especially stubborn. First, switch to a fresh blade — a dull blade is the most common cause. For very old silicone, a caulk-removing tool (a small plastic or metal scraper made for this purpose) works better. You can also soften old caulk with a heat gun on low — just don't overheat the surrounding paint or wood.

- **Panel won't tap free even after cutting all visible caulk**

  First, double-check the perimeter for missed caulk. Check the corners (where caulk often pools and is hard to see), the bottom seam where the panel meets the adapter, and any decorative grooves in the panel's wood frame. Make another full pass with the utility knife. If the panel still won't budge, the panel may also be **screwed in from the door-side jamb (mull post) or the wall-side jamb**. Mull-post screws are typically accessible from the door-rabbet side and can be backed out with a Phillips driver. Wall-side screws are buried in the wall framing and can't be reached — the only options are cutting them with a reciprocating saw blade slipped between the panel and the jamb, or working the panel back and forth until the screw shears off. Both are severe approaches that can damage the surrounding frame, and at that point you may be better off removing the entire door system to access the screws cleanly. Call us at **1-513-871-8907** before you cut anything if you suspect screws are involved.

- **New panel doesn't fit — it's too big**

  Check the dimensions against your measurements before trimming. **Wood and fiberglass panels can be trimmed** — but check your specific product's spec sheet for how much, since allowable trim varies by line and any cut beyond the published limit may void the warranty. Wood panels can be trimmed in length and width with a circular saw and hand plane; fiberglass panels typically allow trimming on the bottom edge only. **Steel panels we don't recommend trimming** — if a steel panel doesn't fit, call us at **1-513-871-8907** for the correct replacement. See Section 6 Step 2 for full trimming guidance.

- **New panel doesn't fit — it's too small**

  Small gaps (1/16–1/8" per side) are normal and account for thermal movement. The exterior caulk bead fills these gaps and seals against weather. Larger gaps (more than about 1/4" total) mean the panel is undersized — it shouldn't be installed because the caulk won't bridge the gap reliably. Call us for the correct replacement.

Need help? We're here.

Call us at 1-513-871-8907, Monday–Friday, 8am–5pm ET. Our team can ship replacement panels, stop trim, glass inserts, or sidelite adapters nationwide — and we'll happily walk you through any step of this replacement over the phone.

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