PEASE DOORS

INSTALLATION GUIDE

Exterior Door Slab Replacement

A complete, step-by-step guide to swapping an exterior door slab while reusing your existing frame and hardware.

APPLIES TO
Steel · Fiberglass · Wood

SKILL LEVEL
Intermediate DIY

TIME
2–4 Hours

What's Inside

This guide walks you through a slab-only replacement — reusing your existing frame, hinge locations, and often your existing lockset. It's the fastest, lowest-cost way to refresh an entry door when the frame is still sound.

A NOTE ON YOUR WARRANTY

Pease exterior steel and fiberglass slabs carry a 20-year limited warranty; wood slabs are covered for 5 years. Failure to properly finish the door — especially wood — can void coverage. See **peasedoors.com/warranty** for full terms.

Before You Start

A slab swap only works if your existing frame, threshold, and weatherstripping are still in good shape. Take ten minutes to walk through the checklist below before you buy a new slab.

IS A SLAB SWAP RIGHT FOR YOU?

Slab replacement is the right call when:

- The frame is square, plumb, and free of rot or major damage
- The threshold is solid and the sill is intact
- You want to keep your existing trim and interior finish
- Your rough opening hasn't shifted (common in older homes)

> **WHEN TO CHOOSE A PREHUNG INSTEAD**
>
> If the jamb is rotted, the frame is out of square by more than 1/8", or the threshold leaks, a full prehung replacement will save you headaches and last longer. Call us at **1-513-871-8907** if you're not sure.

FRAME INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Before ordering your slab, confirm each of the following:

CHECK	WHAT TO LOOK FOR
Jamb condition	No soft spots, splits, or rot — especially near the threshold
Frame square	Measure both diagonals; they should match within 1/8"
Hinge jamb plumb	Level reads plumb top to bottom
Threshold & sill	Flat, solid, no water damage underneath
Weatherstripping	Kerf-in strip intact, or plan to replace it
Strike side reveal	Existing gap is consistent top to bottom

APPLIES TO ALL THREE SLAB TYPES

STEEL | FIBERGLASS | WOOD

This guide works for all three, with type-specific notes called out where it matters — mostly around cutting, drilling, and finishing.

Tools & Materials

Gather everything before you pull the old slab. Swapping an exterior door is a door-open project, and the weather won't wait for a hardware-store run.

ESSENTIAL TOOLS

- ☐ Tape measure (25')
- ☐ 4-foot level
- ☐ Combination square
- ☐ Sharp pencil
- ☐ Utility knife
- ☐ Hammer & nail set
- ☐ Cordless drill/driver
- ☐ 2-1/8" hole saw (lockset bore)
- ☐ 7/8" or 1" spade bit (latch)
- ☐ Phillips & flat screwdrivers
- ☐ Sharp wood chisel (3/4" or 1")
- ☐ Rubber mallet
- ☐ Sawhorses (2)
- ☐ Safety glasses & gloves
- ☐ Shop vacuum
- ☐ Painter's tape

FOR CUTTING OR PLANING (IF NEEDED)

- ☐ Circular saw with sharp fine-tooth blade
- ☐ Straight edge / cutting guide
- ☐ Block plane (wood & fiberglass)
- ☐ Belt sander (optional, for fine fitting)

MATERIALS

- ☐ New door slab (steel, fiberglass, or wood)
- ☐ Replacement weatherstripping (if worn)
- ☐ Exterior-grade caulk
- ☐ Exterior primer & paint (or stain)
- ☐ Long screws (3") for top hinge
- ☐ Door sweep (if not transferring old one)

WOOD SLAB ONLY

You'll also need exterior-grade sealer for the top and bottom edges. Sealing *all six sides* of a wood door before it's hung is the #1 thing you can do to prevent warping and protect your warranty.

PRO TIP

Before you pull the old slab, snap a few photos of how it sits in the opening — hinge orientation, weatherstrip condition, sweep placement, and how the lockset and deadbolt line up with their strikes. When you're hanging the new slab hours later, those photos are a much faster reference than trying to remember what things looked like.

Measure & Verify Your New Slab

Slab replacements fail most often at this step. Take the five minutes to measure carefully and confirm your new slab matches before anything comes off the frame.

TAKE THESE THREE MEASUREMENTS FROM THE OLD SLAB

1. **Width** — from edge to edge across the face, measured at top, middle, and bottom. Use the largest number.
2. **Height** — from top edge to bottom edge, measured at both sides and the middle.
3. **Thickness** — standard is 1-3/4" for exterior doors. Confirm with calipers or a tape.

CHECK YOUR FACTORY PREP

Pease ships slabs three ways. Which one you ordered determines how much work Section 5 involves:

Standard prep	Hinge mortises and 2-1/8" lockset bore machined to Pease's standard locations. Compare these to your old slab — if they line up, you can skip straight to **Section 6: Hang & Fit**.
Custom prep	Mortises and bore machined to dimensions you specified when ordering. Verify against the old slab, then skip to **Section 6**.
Blank	No hinge mortises, no lockset bore. You'll field-prep the slab using the old door as a template — follow Section 5 in full.

> **VERIFY HANDING AND PREP BEFORE CUTTING**
> Whichever prep you ordered, lay the new slab flat next to the old one and confirm the hinge side, lockset side, and any factory machining are on the correct edges to match your opening. A slab machined on the wrong side is a return, not a fix.

ACCEPTABLE REVEALS

The **reveal** is the gap between the slab and the frame when the door is closed. On the top and sides, the industry target is a consistent **1/8" gap** — hinge side plus lock side should add up to roughly 1/4" on a 1-3/4" slab. The bottom is different: you want about 1/2" clearance *before* the sweep is installed, so that once the sweep is attached it seals snugly against the threshold without binding when the door swings.

LOCATION	TARGET GAP	TOLERANCE
Top (head jamb)	1/8"	± 1/16"
Hinge side	1/8"	± 1/32"
Lock side	1/8"	± 1/32"
Bottom (before sweep)	1/2"	± 1/8"
Bottom (after sweep)	Snug seal, no daylight	—

Remove the Old Slab

Removal is the easy part — as long as you do it in the right order. Always work from the bottom hinge up, and have a helper or a wedge ready so the door doesn't fall.

1

Open the door and wedge it

Swing the door open to roughly 90° and slide a shim or wood block under the bottom edge, near the lock side of the slab (opposite the hinges). This keeps the weight off the hinges so the pins come out freely.

2

Drive out the hinge pins — bottom first

Set a nail set or long flathead screwdriver under the pin head and tap it upward with a hammer. Start with the bottom hinge, then the middle, then the top. Removing the top hinge first can cause the door to tip.

3

Lift the slab free

With all pins out, tilt the top of the door away from the jamb and lift it straight up to clear the hinge knuckles. Heavy fiberglass and solid wood slabs benefit from a second set of hands.

4

Set the old slab on sawhorses

Lay it hinge-edge up across two sawhorses. You'll use it as your template for hinge and lockset locations in the next section.

5

Remove old hardware from the old slab

Unscrew the hinge leaves, lockset, deadbolt, and any weatherstripping or sweep attached to the slab itself. Bag the screws — if they're still in good shape, you'll reuse them.

STUCK HINGE PINS? UNSCREW FROM THE DOOR SIDE

Decades of paint can freeze hinge pins in place. First try scoring around the pin head with a utility knife, adding a few drops of penetrating oil, and tapping upward harder. If the pins still won't budge, unscrew the hinge leaves from the **door side** instead — never the jamb side. Backing out the jamb screws chews up the screw holes in the frame, and you need those intact to reuse them when you hang the new slab.

Transfer Hinges & Bore Lockset

Only do this section if your slab came blank. If you ordered standard or custom prep and verified it matches your old door in Section 3, skip ahead to Section 6. Otherwise, your old slab is about to earn its keep — you'll use it as a template to mark every hinge mortise and bore point on the new slab so the layout matches your jamb exactly.

1

Dry-fit the new slab in the opening

Before any cutting, hold the new slab up in the jamb and confirm it's the right width and height with 1/8" gaps top and sides. Trim now if needed — you don't want to discover a sizing issue after you've chiseled mortises.

2

Stack the old slab on top of the new one

Lay the new slab on the sawhorses with the hinge edge facing up. Set the old slab directly on top, hinge edges flush, top edges flush. Clamp the pair together if you have clamps — it prevents slipping.

3

Mark hinge and lock locations

Trace around each old hinge mortise with a sharp pencil. Transfer the top and bottom edges of every mortise down onto the new slab's edge. Mark the lockset bore center too — top and bottom of the 2-1/8" hole.

4

Cut the hinge mortises

Use a combination square to scribe the mortise depth (match the thickness of your hinge leaf, usually about 1/8") on the hinge edge between your top and bottom pencil marks. Score the perimeter of each mortise with a sharp chisel. Make shallow relief cuts across the face, then pare the waste out flat to your depth line. Test-fit the hinge — the leaf should sit flush with the edge of the slab. On wood slabs, a router with a hinge template gives the cleanest result.

5

Bore the lockset

On the face of the slab, drill the 2-1/8" lockset hole with a hole saw — halfway through from one side, then finish from the other side to prevent blowout. On the edge, drill the 1" latch bore with a spade bit, straight through to meet the face hole. Use the backset (2-3/8" or 2-3/4") that matches your lockset.

SEAL CUT EDGES ON WOOD SLABS

Any time you cut, drill, or plane a wood slab, seal the exposed edge with exterior sealer before hanging. Unsealed wood edges wick moisture and are the leading cause of warranty claims. Pease fiberglass slabs have PVC-edged stiles and composite top and bottom rails, so minor trimming or boring doesn't require additional sealing.

Hang & Fit the New Slab

Attach hinges to the new slab first, then lift it into the jamb and drop the pins. If the slab was cut to size correctly, this step should take ten minutes.

1

Attach hinge leaves to the slab

Screw the hinge leaves into each mortise using the original screws. Drill 1/8" pilot holes first — especially in wood slabs — so the screws don't split the edge.

2

Lift the slab into the opening

Tilt the top of the slab toward the jamb and align the hinge knuckles with the jamb hinges — top hinge first. Slip a shim under the bottom edge to hold the weight while you mate the top knuckles.

3

Drop the pins — top first

Start the top pin first. With the top hinge engaged, the door hangs in place while you align the middle and bottom knuckles and drop their pins. Tap each pin home with a hammer until the head seats flush on the knuckle.

4

Check the reveals

Close the door gently. Walk around it and check the gaps against the targets in Section 3. Uneven gaps almost always mean one of three things:

- **Top gap too wide on lock side:** top hinge is loose or needs a long screw
- **Slab binding at top:** trim a hair off the top edge with a block plane
- **Slab rubbing at lock edge:** plane a slight bevel into the lock edge

5

Add a long screw to the top hinge

Replace one of the top-hinge jamb screws with a 3" screw that reaches into the framing. This single screw is the difference between a door that sags in six months and one that stays true for a decade.

BEVEL ONLY IF NEEDED

A 3° bevel on the lock edge helps the slab clear the jamb as it swings, but with modern reveals and weatherstrip it's usually unnecessary. Bevel only if the lock edge is actually catching on the jamb during the swing. **Pease steel doors** ship with a pre-beveled proud wood edge — no field work needed. **Wood slabs** can be field-beveled with a block plane if they catch. **Fiberglass slabs** have PVC edges that can also be beveled in the field if needed.

Install Hardware & Weatherstripping

Your slab hangs and swings cleanly. Now it's time to lock it up and seal it out.

1

Install the latch and lockset

Drop the latch into the 1" edge bore — beveled side facing the jamb — and screw the faceplate flush with the slab's edge. Assemble the lockset through the 2-1/8" face bore according to the manufacturer's instructions.

2

Install the deadbolt (if applicable)

Repeat the process for the deadbolt — typically 6" above the lockset centerline. Drill a second 2-1/8" face bore and 1" edge bore if your old slab had one.

3

Test strike plate alignment

Close the door and try the latch and deadbolt. Both should engage the existing strike plates smoothly. Small misalignments (1/32"–1/16") can often be corrected by loosening the strike screws and shifting the plate within the slop of its screw holes. Larger misalignments mean the slab is sitting slightly off — adjust hinge shims before re-cutting the strike mortise.

4

Replace weatherstripping if worn

If the kerf-in weatherstrip on the jamb is flat, torn, or brittle, pull it out and press a new strip into the kerf by hand. Cut corners at 45° for a clean seal.

5

Install the door sweep

Slide the sweep onto the bottom edge of the slab and adjust it so it touches the threshold without dragging. Tighten the set screws. You should be able to close the door without excessive force and see no daylight underneath.

SECURITY NOTE

For maximum security, use 3" screws in your deadbolt strike plate as well as your top hinge. Both should reach into the wall framing, not just the jamb.

Finishing Your New Slab

Finish is not optional on an exterior door. Pease's warranty requires proper finishing of **all six sides** — front, back, top, bottom, and both edges — on every product line. The specific primer, paint, or stain depends on which product you bought.

Smooth Fiberglass

Clean all surfaces to remove dust, oils, and handling residue, then let the surface fully dry. Apply a high-quality bonding primer such as **Sherwin-Williams Extreme Bond Primer**, followed by a premium exterior-grade acrylic latex paint. For doors in direct sun, choose lighter to medium shades — very dark colors raise surface temperatures and reduce long-term finish performance. Finish as soon as practical after receipt and before prolonged weather exposure.

Woodgrain Fiberglass

Woodgrain fiberglass has an embossed surface that replicates natural wood. Finish with a **gel stain** or an **opaque, heavily pigmented oil-based stain** suitable for fiberglass — these sit on the surface rather than soaking in, letting the grain texture show through. After staining, apply a **polyurethane topcoat with UV inhibitor** to protect against fading, moisture, and weather. Traditional penetrating wood stains are *not* recommended — they're designed to absorb into wood fibers, not bond to fiberglass. Woodgrain fiberglass can also be painted with a solid color if preferred; use a bonding primer (Sherwin-Williams Extreme Bond Primer) first for adhesion.

Steel

Steel doors ship with a factory-applied primer. Lightly clean the primed surface to remove dust and handling residue, then apply a high-quality exterior-grade paint suitable for metal surfaces per the paint manufacturer's instructions. **Steel doors are not intended to be stained.** For doors in direct sun, choose lighter to medium shades — dark colors raise surface temperatures and may affect finish performance. Finish as soon as practical after installation to protect against corrosion.

Solid Mahogany (Wood)

Exterior mahogany is natural hardwood and must be fully sealed. Clean, dry, and lightly sand before finishing. Either a high-quality exterior wood stain (to highlight the grain) or an exterior-grade paint system works — **if you stain, always topcoat with a clear exterior-grade polyurethane or spar varnish with UV protection.** Seal *all* surfaces including cutouts — lock bores, hinge mortises, and any hardware prep — to prevent swelling, warping, or checking. Inspect the finish periodically and reapply topcoats as needed.

OVERHANG REQUIRED FOR WOOD DOORS

Exterior wood doors require protective overhang coverage. The overhang depth must be equal to or greater than the distance from the bottom of the threshold to the underside of the overhang. Doors installed without adequate overhead protection may experience accelerated finish failure and may not be covered under warranty.

Troubleshooting

The four issues below cover nearly every problem people run into after a slab swap. If yours isn't here, or if a fix doesn't hold, call us.

- **Door won't latch**

  The latch bolt isn't aligned with the strike plate hole. Small misalignments can be corrected by loosening the strike screws and shifting the plate within the slop of its screw holes. If the misalignment is more than about 1/16", the slab has dropped — add a 3" screw to the top hinge to pull it tight to the framing.

- **Door rubs at the top of the lock edge**

  Top hinge is pulling away from the jamb. Remove one of the short hinge screws and drive a 3" screw in its place to pull the hinge tight to the framing. This usually fixes the rub instantly.

- **Daylight visible under the closed door**

  The sweep needs adjustment or the threshold needs to be raised. Most adjustable thresholds have screws along the top — turn them counterclockwise to raise the seal contact. Don't over-compress or the door will be hard to close.

- **Wood slab is warping after installation**

  Almost always caused by unsealed edges or cutouts. Remove the slab, seal the top, bottom, both faces, both edges, and any lock bores or hinge mortises with exterior primer or sealer, and rehang. Slabs installed without all six sides sealed are not covered under warranty.

Need help? We're here.

Call us at 1-513-871-8907, Monday–Friday, 8am–5pm ET. Our team ships replacement slabs, hardware, and weatherstripping nationwide — and we'll happily walk you through any step of this install over the phone.

peasedoors.com