



Trouble with Freezing Locks . . .

Are you like most homeowners in Saskatchewan these days - you leave the house only to find you can't get back in the way you left? Freezing locks/door handles are a common issue during the winter months and since I too have experienced the same difficulties, I have spent some time researching solutions.

Weiser recently offered up a few tips for Canadians to try. They suggested spraying a little powdered graphite lubricant into each door lock (where the key goes), and then turning the key in the lock. Graphite lubricant is available at most hardware stores. According to Weiser, this lubricant helps prevent sticking and is recommended to be applied once per season however, they caution users to not over spray. Upon researching the graphite angle a little further, I also found that most users mention having to "dry out" the lock set first. If there is water present, spraying the graphite becomes a waste of time.

Another method is the use of an oil based lubricant (NOT WD40). The oil based lubricant was applied to a disassembled, dry (of course) lock set. It was recommended that lock sets be oiled once a year. The downside of using an oil based lubricant is that you run the risk of gumming-up the lock. A quick fix to being locked out is lock de-icer, which contains alcohol and other lubricants that will help to dissolve not only ice build-up but gummy, dirty deposits. I keep a small bottle of de-icer in my mailbox for those "oh-oh" moments!

Obviously, preventing the lock set from freezing in the first place would be the best choice. Here are a few suggestions I have found:

- Maintain proper humidity levels in your home. This not only helps to prevent your door knobs from freezing, it assists in many other common household issues (i.e. moist windows, hardwood floors warping). Moisture is a common culprit and damages many different building materials
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- Check the weather stripping around the door to make sure it is contacting properly and in good condition
- Check to see if the door gasket inside your lock set is intact. Most newer lock sets will come with one but if you have an older lock set or your gasket is missing, check with your local hardware store to get a replacement. You can even contact the manufacturer for your particular brand

In General:

- Check to make sure your door latch operates smoothly and that the latch lines up properly with the strike plate on the doorjamb
- Door knobs can loosen over time; also check to make sure the knob isn't too tight, the knob should always turn freely