



FIRE PROTECTION

THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF FIRE DOORS

Richard Bingley,
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Fire Door Services talks
Responsible Person and
fire door inspection
and maintenance

Fire doors save lives, so it is vital that they are correctly installed and maintained. They have the important job of providing resistance against the spread of smoke and flame in a building in the event of a fire, protecting property and all-important escape routes allowing more time for occupants to safely evacuate a building.

Even the best quality, manufactured doorsets can be affected and lose fire integrity because of poor installation, or due to wear and tear overtime. The slightest defect can cause issues which is why legislation has been put in place requiring that fire protection systems, including fire doors, undergo a regular maintenance and inspection regime.

Taking responsible note of legislation

If you are the Responsible Person for a building (this can

be a building owner, manager, leaseholder, or employer) it's imperative you make yourself aware of the legislation that applies to fire door maintenance and inspection.

Article 17 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) makes it a legal requirement to adequately maintain fire-resisting doors, so they are fit for purpose.

The importance of inspection and maintenance is highlighted in BS8214:2016 which states that inspection, maintenance and repair of any damage is to be undertaken on a regular basis if the required fire resistance is to be maintained. The onus is also on the Responsible Person to have a documented fire door maintenance regime.

Article 18 of the RRO comments that it is also required that the Responsible Person uses a Competent Person to undertake the necessary inspection, repair, and maintenance.

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DOORS IN HIGH-TRAFFIC AREAS THAT MAY BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO MORE WEAR AND TEAR AND DAMAGE MAY BE REQUIRED TO BE CHECKED MORE FREQUENTLY. ”



A Competent Person is someone who has sufficient training, experience and knowledge to assist the Responsible Person in undertaking the preventive and protective measures.

How to source accredited third-party assistance

When looking for a Competent Person to undertake fire door inspections and maintenance, it is recommended that a person or company with relevant accreditation received from a third-party certification scheme be appointed.

The FDIS, FIRAS and BM TRADA are well-known examples of schemes which hold databases of accredited companies or individuals to make it easier to search for suppliers in the required locality. Other schemes are also available.

How often should inspections be done?

The frequency of a fire door inspection is dependent on the situation of the door and the type of building they are installed in.

From 23 January 2023 the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 made it a legal requirement for the Responsible Person for all multi-residential buildings in England over 11 metres high to carry out quarterly checks of doors in communal areas and annual checks – on a best endeavour basis – of all flat entrance doors leading onto communal areas.

The BWF Fire Door Alliance recommends that in other buildings fire doors are inspected at least every six months although newly occupied building may need more frequent checks in the first year.

Also, doors in high-traffic areas that may be susceptible to more wear and tear and damage may be required to be checked more frequently than the recommended 6 monthly period.

Identify problem areas

Though it is paramount to use a Competent Person to inspect, maintain and install fire doors it is good practice for the Responsible Person to be versed in identifying problems that could affect the door's integrity and function. This enables the instruction of remedial works to be carried out before the damage becomes beyond repair, becoming a more economical way of fire door maintenance.

A simple checklist of items that can easily be seen would include checking for any damage to door leaves and door frames. If the core of the door is damaged, then the fire integrity is lost. Also check if the door frame is securely fixed to the partition.

Checking the gaps between the door and frame, and meeting stiles of double doors for excessive gaps ensures that the intumescent seals used to seal a door in the event of a fire will work correctly. The industry standard for these gaps is 3mm +/- 1mm. Using a fire door gap checker can assist with this simple test.

Look out for defective or missing seals around door edges and ▶



frames. Check vision panels for damaged or missing glazing seals or glazing beads. Locks, latches and closers must be working properly to ensure correct closing and latching into the door frame.

To emphasise, if any faults are identified, steps should be taken to remediate these as soon as possible by a Competent Person. Using a third-party qualified company or individual will ensure the work is to compliant fire door standards.

Where issues are identified early and dealt with in a timely manner this will not only safeguard property and life but also save on additional expense later.

Not all damaged fire doors need replacing

Depending on the extent of damage to a fire door and where appropriate, acceptable repair techniques can be utilised to bring it back to conformity, negating the need and the expense of replacing fire rated doorsets. These acceptable repair techniques should be carried out

by a Competent Person suitably qualified to carry out the work.

Protect for the future

A fire door is made up of many components that all need to be working to their optimum to preserve the integrity of a fire door. Installing certified reputable fire-rated door protection products can protect some of these essential elements of the door, helping to maintain the condition whilst also reducing the time and money required to repair and replace.

For example, a fire-rated door edge protector can be installed to either or both the leading and hinged edges to shield these vulnerable parts from impact damage detrimental to the performance of the door. Door edge protectors can also be used to bring excessive gaps at long edges back to conformity.

A damaged glazing bead unit can be replaced with a fire rated PVCu clad hardwood unit. The plastic covering will preserve both the timber and will not affect the integrity of the fire door.



IF ANY FAULTS ARE IDENTIFIED, STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO REMEDIATE THESE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BY A COMPETENT PERSON.

The main body of the door - or leaf - is subjected to continual wear and tear simply by people using it. If a door leaf is continually hit at the same point, it will in time present with damage which, if not dealt with, will render a fire door non-compliant to fire regulations. A simple solution would be the installation of a 2mm thick PVCu fire-rated door protection panel.

Door frames and architraves can also receive protection from a frame, architrave and stop lath protection system.

Documentation

On completion of the work documents such as fire door inspection reports, fire certificates, fire assessment reports, manufacturers fixing instructions, product data sheets and maintenance instructions should be provided to the Responsible Person to be stored in the Operating & Maintenance manuals for easy access and future reference.

Where work is carried out under a third-party certification scheme such as FIRAS or BM TRADA then certification for this will be provided.

The financial sense of fire door inspections and maintenance

Fire door inspections and any subsequent remedial work does have a cost implication. However, a proactive inspection and maintenance regime can be cost-effective in the long-term by minimising fire door repairs and fire door replacement. ■



FIRE RATED DOOR PROTECTION

must be important to you



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