

## UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER.



### FIRE SAFETY ADVICE NOTE NO 2.

#### Fire Safety Advice for Fire Door checks.

#### 1. Introduction.

Fire doors are an important safety feature of any building in which people work or visit, as they resist the spread of fire and smoke limiting its effect. They are particularly important elements of fire protection on escape routes and as such must be monitored and maintained to ensure their effective operation.

A fire door is a door with a fire-resistance rating (sometimes referred to as a fire protection rating for closures) used as part of a passive fire protection system to reduce the spread of fire and smoke between separate compartments of a structure and to enable safe egress from a building.

#### 2. What do fire doors do?

Fire doors can save lives and prevent further damage to the building and its contents.

- They contain the fire in the room in which it started.
- Fire doors keep escape routes, such as corridors, clear from fire, giving occupants of the building longer to escape and better access for the fire service.
- They protect the remainder of the building, its contents, and other buildings nearby from further damage.

#### 3. How can you tell if it's a Fire Door?

There are small blue signs on fire doors to show that it is a fire door and it is important to keep fire doors closed unless they are designated to have automatic closing devices. A fire door should have labels which would typically be on the door centrally or found on the edge of the door between the top and center hinges. The frame should have a label or marking as well.



Above - An example of Fire doors with blue labeling system.



Above - another example of a fire door label usually found on the edge of a fire door.

#### 4. How do fire doors work?

Fire doors prevent the spread of fire for a specified time. They are constructed from materials that will withstand fire for either 30 minutes or 60 minutes, depending on the fire door rating. Fire doors are fitted with intumescent strips in a groove on every edge of the door or fire door frame. When a fire breaks out, the heat causes the intumescent strips to expand to fill the gap between the fire door and the frame.

This seals the room and stops the spread of fire for a given time. A fire door will only work if it is closed when the fire breaks out, so you should always ensure that your fire door is fitted with an automatic door closer and a sign that identifies the door as a fire door.

## **5. How long do fire doors last in fire?**

Fire doors and their frames are usually tested to hold back fire for 30 minutes (FD30) or 60 minutes (FD60). Their ability to withstand fire is dependent on them being properly installed with the correct seals and fire rated hardware including fire door closers. The condition of a fire door, especially one that's in regular use could deteriorate over time. Check your fire doors regularly and ensure any fire door maintenance is attended to promptly by placing the issue on the University's helpdesk. Fire door inspections can help to identify non-compliant fire doors. Fire doors can have a rating greater than 60 minutes but these are not required in most situations.

## **6. Fire Safety action planning.**

It is appreciated that the number of Fire Doors can vary within a building and that it may not be practical or possible to check every door every day. The ideal is that all Fire Doors are checked at least once a month, it is suggested that the total number of fire doors in a building are divided by 30 ( giving a figure for the number of fire doors that require checking each day in a month). These should then be divided up so that occupiers know how many fire doors to check, particularly if the building is very large ensure that every fire door is checked at least once a month . The check is a visual check see guidance below.

## **7. Visual checks of fire doors .**

### **Doors and Frames.**

Ensure that the intumescent seals and cold smoke seals at the top and sides of the door or frame are not damaged or missing. Check that the door is marked correctly with appropriate signage.

### **Vision Panels.**

Vision panels should not be covered up or obstructed. Make sure the door body (leaf) has not been damaged, warped or twisted. Ensure it closes correctly around all parts of the frame. Check that the self-closer shuts the door onto the latch, from any open position. Check the gaps around the door frame look constant (2 to 4mm). Check the hinges look firmly fixed into the door and frame with no missing screws. Ensure that the intumescent seals and cold smoke seals at the top and sides of the door or frame are not damaged or missing. Make sure any glass and the beads holding the glass are fitted firmly. Check that the door is marked correctly with appropriate signage.

### **Self-closing devices.**

Fire doors can only be left open if they are held open in a legal way, such as with a fire door retainer or a hold open free-swing door closer. It is dangerous to 'prop' or 'wedge' open fire doors. Fire doors are fitted with self-closing devices so that if a fire breaks out, they close and will perform as intended. If a fire door is wedged open, it will not slow or stop the spread of fire. Using a fire door retainer or free-swing door closer will ensure that in the event of a fire the fire door will still automatically close, ensuring fire safety is maintained.

### **It is Prohibited to:-**

Wedge open, obstruct or interfere with a designated fire door, to obstruct an automatically closing fire doors, impair automatic door openers for mobility impaired persons on a fire door, to cut or change a fire door.

**In conclusion**, it is not anticipated that this visual check is work intensive, remember it is a quick visual check and the majority of doors should be fitted properly all intact and working perfectly well. It is only the odd one which should require referring to the University help desk, but by ensuring that this is the case and that any defective door is repaired in a timely manner it will ensure that everyone within our buildings are safe from fire if one should occur.