



Information Sheet – Fire Resistant Front Doors

This information sheet is for leaseholders of Wandsworth Borough Council flats. It aims to help you identify if your front door is fire compliant. Fire compliant front doors are not required where the door opens directly onto a street.

If you have an original door (one fitted by the Council), the door would have met building regulations at the time it was fitted, but you must ensure all original doors are in good working order and have an operating self closing device. If you need to replace your door it will need to be fire compliant under current building regulations. You should seek independent advice in the event you are unsure what building regulations apply to the type of property you own.

Why is a fire door important?

Controlling the spread of fire and smoke in buildings is vital to allow occupants to either remain or evacuate as instructed and enable the fire brigade to gain access to fight the fire. It is therefore critical that fire doors and fire resistant glazed panels perform correctly.

What if I have inherited my door and I am unsure if it is compliant?

If you inherited a door from a previous owner, then you should check with your solicitor who may be able to confirm if any alterations to the door took place and attain any certificates of compliance from the manufacturer of the door or building control.

Please note that UPVC front doors are not fire compliant.

If you cannot find any information about your door, there are some simple checks you can carry out to help you identify compliance:

Your door should be:

- A minimum of 44mm in thickness / 30 minutes fire resistant
- The door should be of a solid timber construction. If you knock the door and it sounds hollow the door is unlikely to be compliant
- In good condition and working order (note: the hinges should be sufficient to hold the weight of the door)
- Have a working self closing device (when the door is opened, it shuts on its own)
- Any glass panels in the door, side panel or above the door must be 30 minute fire resistant and in good condition. They cannot be boarded up.
- The frame must be 30 minute fire resistant (a minimum of 30mm thick) without any pieces cut out.
- The door and the frame must fit as a compatible set (the gap between the door and frame should be around 2 to 4 mm)
- Where there is a letterbox, it should be made of a solid metal (not aluminium) or certified fire resistant material. Solid metals will be magnetic, where aluminium will not.

How can I tell if my front door is fire compliant?

Fire compliant doors can be certified. Certification should be carried out by a UKAS accredited third party to ensure independence and certainty.

One such scheme is that offered by the British Woodworking Federation (BWF). Every BWF-CERTIFIRE Fire Door Assembly carries a permanent and tamper evident label (as per the image below). For more information, visit the BWF website: www.bwf.org.uk



Building Regulations state that a front door to a flat must be **FD30S**. This means that the door needs to be 30 minute fire and smoke resistant, FD = Fire Door and 30 = relates to the minutes of fire resistance, S denotes that the door is also smoke sealed.

BM TRADA is another scheme which uses a system known, as TRADA Q-Mark fire door scheme, in which a series of coloured plugs is inserted into the door to indicate the fire door type, member details, the scope of certification during specification and installation, and service history. The plugs can usually be seen from the top of the door.

For more details visit the BM TRADA website at www.bmtrada.com



What if I need to replace my door?

If you need to replace your door, it should comply with the current building regulations, which provide guidance as to the minimum building standards to be achieved. They reference the relevant British and European Standards defining the test requirements and performance of the fire door assembly or fire door set. Part B – Volume 2 of the Building Regulations, provides details of what a fire compliant door must consist of. Below is a list of the critical components defined in the current building regulations:-

The door leaf (main component of the door) – The door must as a minimum be of 30 minute fire resistance, in accordance with British Standard 476. You may see this as denoted by an FD30 door rating.

Fire and smoke control doors - New flat entrance doors are required to be both fire and smoke control doors (tested to BS 476-31.1 or EN 1634-3 standards). This means there will be either a combined fire and smoke seal or an intumescent seal and a separate smoke seal to the entire perimeter of the door and/or in the frame. If an air transfer grille (ATG) is fitted to the door, it will contain an automatic smoke damper that will close if a fire breaks out. The 'S' suffix (e.g. FD30S) denotes that the door is both a fire and smoke controlled door.

Fire Door set - Fire door sets relate to the complete unit consisting of a door frame and a door leaf, supplied with all essential parts from a single source (BS EN 12519). This means that it is supplied as a complete unit from one supplier. This guarantees that the entire door set and components, will match the fire tested, original design and fire certificate. As the Council own the frame, if you wish to fit a new door set, you must seek agreement from your Area Housing Team first.

Door Frames - The frame must have the same fire resistance as the door and fit as a compatible set with the door. New doors fitted to existing frames should always be installed by a certified fire door installer.

Intumescent seals - The edges of the door are most susceptible to fire penetration. Intumescent seals expand in the event of a fire and seal the gap between door and frame, stopping the passage of fire. The gap between the frame and door is nominally 3-4mm. Excessive gaps may prevent intumescent seals performing correctly in the event of a fire. All new compliant front doors are fitted with a combined intumescent and smoke seal in accordance with BS476 Part 31.1. 1987.

Smoke seals - Combined with, or separate from intumescent seals and located in the entire perimeter of the frame or door edge, similar to draft strips. These seals stop the flow of smoke.



Image (right) show smoke seal being fitted to a door frame

Latch or lock - The latch or lock engages the door leaf securely to the frame when the door is in the closed position. It is critical in securing the door in the event of a fire and preventing warping of the door.

Hinges - A minimum of 3 fire rated hinges must be used with correct intumescent pads, location and fixings.

Image (right) fire rated hinge



Door closer - Flat entrance doors should be fitted with a self closing device to ensure the fire door always returns to its fully closed position and is held in the closed position when not in use.

Image (right) shows an overhead door closer



Other ironmongery - Apertures are cut in door leaves for a variety of reasons; to accommodate glazed fixed light, air transfer grilles or other ironmongery such as letter plates. Cutting apertures and fitting of fire rated components or glazing systems in a fire door is a highly skilled operation that should be carried out only by a trained person, ensuring the correct materials are used. The allowed size, shape and compatible materials and components are detailed on the primary fire test report, assessment or third party certification document.

Fire door glazing - Some fire doors have vision panels fitted in them. Special fire tested glass and glazing systems must be used and should be etched with a recognised trademark or BS476-22. When doors are fitted with glazed panels, this operation should only be undertaken by a trained and competent individual, with a good working knowledge of the specific materials and glazing systems required.

The importance of correct installation - The importance of correct installation of fire doors cannot be over emphasised. There are many recorded instances where an otherwise acceptable door set has been rendered ineffectual due to poor installation. Fire door installation is a skilled speciality and even larger contractors are increasingly specifying the use of 'registered' installers.

Important note

It is the responsibility of you as the leaseholder to ensure the correct door is fitted for the type of property you own in accordance with the building regulations. If you are unsure, you should seek independent advice to determine what type of front door is required. You can obtain further advice on compliant front doors from Building Control on email buildingcontrol@wandsworth.gov.uk or telephone 020 8871 7620. There may be a charge for this service.