

MHCLG Fire Doors FAQs for Local Authorities and Housing Associations

Why is MHCLG investigating the fire door industry?

The government began investigating the fire door industry after it was found that a glazed, GRP¹ composite flat front entrance fire door from Grenfell Tower manufactured by Manse Masterdor failed a 30 minute fire resistance test, required by buildings regulations guidance, after approximately 15 minutes.

The independent expert advisory panel², appointed to advise on immediate safety action following the Grenfell Tower fire, recommended the department undertake an investigation into the wider fire door market to understand how widespread the problem was.

What actions are MHCLG carrying out as part of its investigation, and in relation to which fire doors?

The department's investigation into the fire door market includes testing the performance of fire doors through furnace testing. We want to ensure that fire doors being sold meet the required performance standard of 30 minutes for fire resistance.

The government's investigation into the GRP composite fire doors identified issues with the consistency of fire-resistance performance of these doors. In response the GRP composite fire door industry has taken voluntary action to:

- Withdraw all GRP composite fire doors from the market
- Inform customers and recommend that they should review their building risk assessment to determine how quickly doors should be replaced
- Undertake a joint testing regime through the *Association of Composite Door Manufacturers* to resolve problems of performance consistency, and
- Establish protocols to provide greater quality assurance of GRP composite fire doors, such as testing doors on both sides.

This voluntary action is being monitored by trading standards and the department is closely tracking progress. We will be keen to understand what the industry has changed to ensure greater performance consistency of their fire doors in future.

The government's independent Expert Panel and the National Fire Chiefs Council has clarified that while the risk to public safety remains low, those buildings affected by this issue should review their fire risk assessment to determine how quickly affected doors should be replaced.

¹ Glass Reinforced Plastic

² www.gov.uk/government/collections/building-safety-independent-expert-advisory-panel

The government has now moved its investigation to look at the timber fire doors market, including furnace testing.

What has the investigation revealed so far?

The government's investigation into the GRP composite fire doors identified issues with the consistency of performance of these doors. Building Regulations guidance is clear that fire doors (other than lift doors) should resist fire from both sides. The British Standard (BS476:22) does allow testing from one side in certain circumstances but GRP composite doors should be tested from both sides of the door.

When purchasing fire doors, building owners should assure themselves that doors are fit for purpose with the appropriate test evidence for the specific type of door.

- **Which fire doors are affected?**

Currently only 30-minute GRP composite fire doors, but the investigations are on-going.

- **Which fire doors will potentially be affected in the future, pending further MHCLG testing?**

Our investigations have moved on to look at the timber fire door market.

- **Issues with third-party accreditation**

The Government is working closely with all the third party certification bodies to identify ways to strengthen the current system and provide greater assurance that all fire doorsets on the market meet and exceed performance and quality standards.

- **What information is there for building owners to determine whether fire doors are compliant?**

The Expert Panel has issued guidance for building owners on assurance and replacing of flat entrance fire doors. You access this guidance through the following web address: www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-building-owners-on-assurance-and-replacing-of-flat-entrance-fire-doors

You can also access government advice, press notices, and letters through the following web address: www.gov.uk/guidance/building-safety-programme.

- **Should building owners be commissioning their own fire doors tests? Which kind of tests?**

Building owners should not need to undertake their own testing of fire doors.

Landlords or building owners should reference the manufacturer's test evidence/certification and documentation for existing or proposed fire doorsets. Any test evidence used to substantiate the fire resistance rating of a door or shutter should be carefully checked to ensure that it adequately demonstrates compliance and is applicable to the adequately complete installed assembly. Small differences in detail (such as glazing apertures, intumescent strips, door frames and ironmongery etc.) may significantly affect the rating.

Flat entrance fire doors should have test evidence demonstrating they meet the performance requirement in the Building Regulations guidance for fire resistance and smoke control from both sides.

Where additional assurance that existing or proposed fire doorsets meet the current benchmarks is desired, professional advice can be sought. Using an independent UKAS accredited certification body whose engineers are qualified and adhere to the latest Passive Fire Protection Federation guidance would be a good way of securing this professional advice.

Social housing providers can also join the government programme of testing. You can do this if you would like to share results of tests you have commissioned or if you would like to understand about how a make of solid timber door you are using performs under testing. If you wish to do so or would like more information, please contact: firedoorteam@communities.gov.uk.

- **What role should third party accreditation play in helping building owners to determine whether fire doors are safe? Which third party accreditors are available and where can building owners find information about the standards they apply?**

The Expert Panel advise that while it should not be solely relied upon third party certification by a UKAS accredited body can provide landlords and building owners greater assurance on the performance of the doors.

What actions should building owners take if they are affected?

The government's independent Expert Panel and the National Fire Chiefs Council has clarified that while the risk to public safety remains low, those buildings affected by this issue should review their fire risk assessment to determine how quickly affected doors should be replaced.

- **What information on affected doors has been released by MHCLG or fire doors suppliers to help building owners conduct fire risk assessments?**

Building owners should review their risk assessment based on advice from the supplier of the door. In the absence of this the government's advice is to use the assumption of flat front entrance fire doors failing at approximately 15 minutes in the furnace test, so half of their expected performance, with no single point of failure.

What should a building owner do if a building has both non-compliant fire doors and dangerous ACM³ cladding?

Buildings with ACM cladding should have interim safety measures in place, further information on what steps should be taken can be accessed through the following web address: www.gov.uk/guidance/building-safety-programme.

- **Will more information on affected doors (make, model, and failure times) be released by MHCLG to help building owners conduct fire risk assessments? When and where will building owners be able to find this information?**

Government is committed to providing relevant information to support building risk assessments. Further conclusions from the investigation will be shared when they are available.

- **What information should building owners submit to MHCLG, and where?**

The National Fire Chiefs Council has asked that the responsible person provide details of the buildings where the Manse Masterdor doors have been installed. This should be done by completing the template found through the following web link: www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Manse-Masterdor-Fire-Door-data-collection.

Completed forms should be sent to: nfccwmfshighrisecoordinationgroup@wmfs.net.

- **Which fire doors are suitable for the replacement of non-compliant doors? Where can building owners find this information?**

The Expert Panel has issued guidance for building owners on assurance and replacing of flat entrance fire doors. You access this guidance through the following

³ Aluminium Composite Material

web address: www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-building-owners-on-assurance-and-replacing-of-flat-entrance-fire-doors. Further conclusions from the investigation will be shared when they are available.

The Police considered that this test result might have wider implications for public safety – why are you saying there is no immediate public safety risk?

Fire doors work as part of a layered fire protection system within a building. While our investigations may suggest a particular fire door might not perform to the required standard, all doors can provide protection in a fire when closed.

The Government's independent Expert Panel and the National Fire Chiefs Council has clarified that while the risk to public safety remains low, those buildings affected by this issue should review their fire risk assessment to consider this new information and determine how quickly affected doors should be replaced.

What are the next steps for MHCLG's investigation (which fire doors, and over which period of time)?

The independent expert advisory panel has recommended the department undertake an investigation into the wider fire door market. Over the next few months the investigation will focus on the timber fire door market before reviewing the timetable for further investigations into the fire door market.

Will building owners receive compensation for the costs of replacing non-compliant fire doors?

This is a matter for building owners to determine directly with the contractor who installed the fire doors and/or the supplier who provided the fire door.

What is the role of Trading Standards?

Where issues with the marketing of a fire door are identified trading standards will monitor the action being taken by the fire door supplier to determine if and when the fire door concerned can return to market. They will also inspect the suppliers operations and commission further investigations into other fire doors produced by the supplier if they have cause for concern.

What advice can you give Environmental Health Officers on how this affects HHSRS assessments?

In the absence of specific advice on the performance of a particular GRP composite door from the manufacturer, a time of 15 minutes performance should be assumed for affected fire doors. Performance of fire doors should be taken into account in the

HHSRS assessment. While our investigations may suggest a particular fire door might not perform to the required standard, all doors can provide protection in a fire when closed. The affect of fire doors with issues on HHSRS assessment is dependent on the characteristics of individual buildings and the layered fire protection it has in place.

Who should residents contact if they are concerned?

Building owners and residents should ensure all fire doors are kept in good condition and the self-closing mechanism working correctly. Deficiencies should be reported to the landlord or managing agent. Doors and the self-closing mechanism should not be removed as this increases the safety risk.

In the event of a fire residents and guests in a building should follow existing fire procedures.

Fire doors are specially engineered doors designed to contain fire for a period of time. Fire doors work as part of a layered fire protection system within a building. While our investigations may suggest a particular fire door might not perform to the required standard, all doors can provide protection in a fire when closed.