What is a fire door?

Fire doors are specialist doors which have been tested and purpose-built to withstand fires and to prevent the spread of smoke for as long as possible. They enable buildings to compartmentalise and delay the spread of fire from one area to another and form a crucial part of a passive fire protection strategy. Most domestic fire doors are classed as FD30 which means they can resist the passage of smoke and flames for at least 30 minutes.

Why is this door fitted to my home?

Fire doors have safety features to prevent the spread of flames and smoke. When closed, they form a barrier to stop the spread of fire and smoke. When opened, they provide a means of escape and keep the flames and smoke behind you.

Most General Needs accommodation have what is referred to as a "stay put" policy. This means that if there is a fire in your building and you are in your home, it is preferable for you to stay there, until directed otherwise. Should there be a fire in a communal area, a properly maintained fire door will prevent smoke and flames coming through the door. Should there be a fire in a neighbouring flat, the fire door of the affected flat will prevent the fire from spreading to other areas.

Please check your fire action notice (leaflet provided or on your notice board) for guidance of what to do in case of a fire.

How is a fire door different from a non-fire rated door?

A fire door has additional features that you won't find on normal internal doors. These features ensure that the door and surround can hold back the spread of smoke and flames for a specific time. Your front door will have at least 30 minutes fire resistance.

<u>Door construction and surround</u>

A flat front entrance door is normally 45mm thick (thicker and heavier than a normal door) and will be constructed of solid timber or a specially constructed fire-resistant material.

The surrounding frame and doorstops are also constructed of more robust materials than a normal door frame and will also have a fire-resistance of 30 minutes.

The gap around the door should be no more than 4mm around the top and sides and 10mm at the threshold.

It is essential that these items are in good repair. If there are any holes or damage to the door leaf or frame this will affect the fire resistance of the door. If any parts are damaged, you need to report this as a repair.

Automatic door closer

A flat front entrance door will be fitted with a device that automatically closes the door and prevents it from remaining open. These are normally of the overhead closer type or a sprung chain closer often referred to as a “Perko”, where a chain is fitted into the door frame, attached to the door edge. Both of these fittings operate by pulling the door closed if left open.

Regardless of which type of closer is fitted, it is essential that the device closes the door fully. If the closer to your front door doesn’t do this, you need to report this as a repair. In most instances a simple adjustment is all that is needed.

Smoke seals and intumescent strips

A flat front entrance door surround will be fitted with strips either in the frame or in the door leaf itself. These strips serve two functions. Firstly, there will be either a flat rubber like or brush like strip fitted. This is a cold smoke seal and prevents smoke travelling around the door. Secondly, there will also be a flat cardboard or plastic like strip fitted. This strip is designed to expand if it gets very hot and will swell to prevent flames coming around the door. This is called an intumescent strip.

It is essential that these strips are complete with no gaps around the door. If your front door has any missing or damaged areas, you need to report this as a repair.

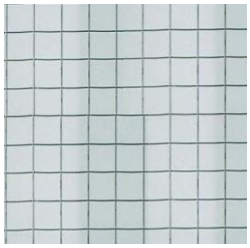
Hinges and Ironmongery.

A flat front entrance door will be fitted with heavy-duty fire-resistant ironmongery. These are specifically designed to be fitted to fire doors.

Fire doors will also be fitted with three hinges instead of the two hinges fitted to a normal door.

It is essential that these items are in good repair. If any are damaged, you need to report this as a repair.

Glazing.



If your door is fitted with a glazing aperture, the glass and surround will be fire-rated. The glass will either contain a wire mesh inside or be of a specially designed fire-resistant type of glass which will be marked in the corner.

It is essential that these items are in good repair. If any glazing is cracked or damaged, you need to report this as a repair.

Letterbox

A flat front entrance door letterbox is designed to be fire-resistant. It will be fitted with heavy duty sprung flaps to both sides and have an intumescent lining in the box itself.

It is essential that these items are in good repair. If any are damaged, you need to report this as a repair.

Are there other fire doors in my building?

There will be fire doors located at corridor/stairwell junctions, to meter or storage cupboards located along corridors or landings and at certain distances along straight corridors. Any door that leads into or off an escape route or corridor must be a fire-rated door. These doors will essentially have the same fire resisting properties as other fire doors, in that they will prevent the spread of flames and smoke from one area of the building to an adjacent one. They will also have instruction signage to indicate the door status.

Some doors can be held open with a specifically designed magnetic closer, but these turn off allowing the door to close if the fire alarm is operated.

<u>IMPORTANT.</u> Fire doors must NEVER be left propped open with a wedge or furniture even for short periods. The door will only prevent the spread of smoke and flames when closed.

What can prevent fire doors from operating correctly?

The main function of a fire door is to close fully and correctly. If a fire door isn't closing, it won't prevent the spread of smoke and flames. Reasons that a fire door isn't closing properly can include.

- Doors can occasionally warp due to high humidity or moisture ingress.
- Door leaves can drop if the hinges are working loose.
- The door closer isn't working correctly or damaged.
- Doors can become damaged due to repeated impacts from push chairs, bicycles, mobility scooters, etc.
- Small stones, debris, etc can be stuck in the corner of the frame preventing the door from closing.
- Smoke seals and intumescent strips can fail to function correctly if they are painted over.

If you see a communal fire door that isn't closing or is damaged in some way, it needs to be reported to us as soon as possible.