

# A guide to fire door safety

## Don't put lives at risk

Specifying the correct locking solution on emergency escape and fire doors can be the difference between life and death. Here's what you need to know.

### "It couldn't happen to me"

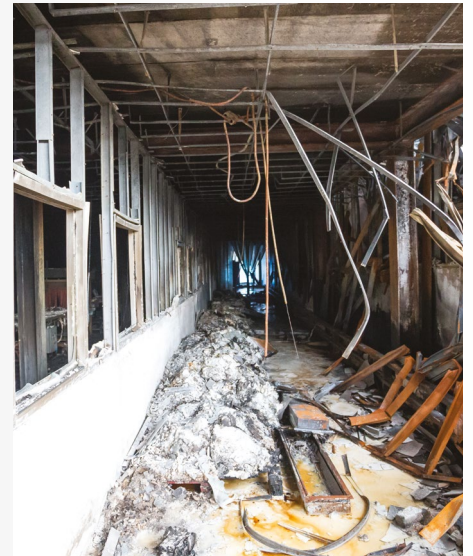
Failure to fulfil fire safety responsibilities is a serious offence. Despite several tragic examples of preventable fires in recent history, the numbers suggest that people still don't take it seriously enough.

There are **20,000** commercial fires in the UK every year, and research suggests that the economy has lost **£1 billion** in GDP and **5,000** jobs from

preventable fires in commercial properties.

The Fire Door Inspection Scheme (FDIS) also recently found that more than **76%** of fire doors inspected last year were condemned as not fit for purpose.

Fire doors and escape exits save lives, and though compliance can be a minefield, it should be the top priority for every person responsible for access control.



A London Hotel was fined **£200,000** in 2015 for a range of offences including missing fire doors.

A school and its former fire risk assessor were each fined **£10,000** for failing to make suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments.

A Leicester landlord was sentenced to **8 months imprisonment** when inspectors discovered fire doors were missing, left open or jammed with a fire extinguisher.



### "It's not my responsibility"

A 2014 survey found that only half of respondents were aware of their legal obligations and only **45%** said they would know how to spot a 'dodgy' fire door.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 makes it a legal requirement to ensure that fire and escape doors are correctly installed and maintained so they are always fit for purpose.

It places responsibility for fire safety in buildings to whoever has day-to-day control of the premises, including owners, facilities managers and site managers.

If you specify, install, identify or maintain fire doors, you need to ensure you have the correct knowledge, so you don't put people at risk.

### Know your standards

BS179 Emergency Escape: when an occupant is aware of the environment)

BS1125 Panic Escape: for environments used by the general public

BS13637 Electronically Controlled Escape Systems: for escape routes

At Abloy, fire door safety is the cornerstone of our work. If you have any doubts about the compliance of your exits, don't hesitate to speak to our experts for more information on **01902 364 500** or email [info@abloy.co.uk](mailto:info@abloy.co.uk).

# The essential guide to checking fire doors

Fire doors save lives in two ways. When they are closed, they form a barrier to prevent fire from spreading. When they are open, they provide a way to safely escape.

All fire doors must be frequently inspected to ensure they are in good condition and will act as

expected in a fire scenario. You should do this as part of your building's risk assessment, as regular maintenance of the door will help keep the occupants safe. At Abloy, we understand that fire door standards and regulations can be complex and difficult to manage. We've designed this guide to help any Responsible

Persons to ensure fire doors are in an optimum condition and ready to perform.

If you suspect a fire door is damaged or faulty, or spot that the door has any of the problems listed in the guide, have it immediately checked by a competent person.

## 1. Certification

16% of all fire doors inspected in 2019 weren't genuine. To identify a legitimate fire door, look for its certification. You can locate the CE-marked label or plug on the top or the side

of the door. Often, fire doors also have warning signage or emergency lighting above the door to indicate that it's part of an escape route.



## 2. Obstructed doors

To perform effectively, fire doors must be able to shut firmly so regularly check they aren't wedged or propped open. Likewise, they should not be blocked with furniture or other barriers. If you find this

happening, immediately remove the obstruction and raise awareness with the building's occupants so they understand the risk.

## 3. Hinges and latches

Hinges are vital to a fire door's integrity. There must be a minimum of three hinges that are of the correct specification to the building type. Frequently check their screws are all in place and

tightly secured. Likewise, ensure the latch clicks when the fire door closes, and that it holds firmly in place without rattling.



## 4. Gaps

Gaps are one of the top three reasons fire doors failed in 2019 inspections. If the gap is too large, smoke and fire can easily spread, so ensure they are limited to 3mm at the tops and sides of the fire door, and less than

8mm at the bottom. You shouldn't be able to see any light coming from beneath the door.

# The essential guide to checking fire doors

## 5. Seals

Intumescent seals around a fire door are a few mm thick and act as a final barrier to fire and smoke. Examine them

to make sure they're continuous, intact and without any damage, particularly as they can sometimes be accidentally painted over.



## 6. Closing doors

Fire doors need to automatically close firmly on the latch without sticking to the floor. Open the door and wait for it to close on its own, which should take around 8 seconds. Correctly installed

**door closers** – the metal box and lever at the top of the door – can automate this while maintaining compliance. If a fire alarm sounds, these will automatically release the doors, and should be tested weekly.

## 7. Doors and frames

Visually examine the doors and frames are secured and have no wear and tear. Doors should not have gaps or holes and mustn't be warped. Also ensure that glass in the door is not cracked

either. The frames, which are just as integral as the doors and must be bought from an appropriately licensed company, should be checked in case they are coming away from the walls or ceilings.



This guide provides simplified general advice. If you are in any doubt or suspect your fire doors breach any of the points, immediately seek the advice of a Fire Risk Assessor or call our experts on **01902 364 500** or email **info@abloy.co.uk**.

# Your fire door check list

No.	Location	Certification	Obstruction	Hinges / latches	Gaps	Seals	Closing doors	Doors and frames	Comments	Action required

If you are concerned about your fire doors, take action immediately and contact a Fire Risk Assessor or the experts at Abloy on **01902 364 500** or email **info@abloy.co.uk**.