



KEY FEATURES OF A FIRE DOOR

Fire doors can form part of a fire protected enclosure, corridor or compartment wall providing access between parts of the building or are used to sub-divide corridors forming part of an escape route.



CERTIFICATION MARK - WHAT IS IT?

To provide additional assurance to their customers regarding the performance of a fire door over that provide by fire test evidence alone, many manufacturers choose to become part of a third-party product certification scheme, such as CERTIFIRE, BM TRADA Q-Mark or Kiwa IFC. The evidence that a fire door falls under such a scheme can be in the form of a label or plug applied to the edge of the door leaf or in the frame rebate. These marks indicate the fire door's fire rating expressed by a colour code in the case of plugs or, for labels, as "FD" followed by a number, e.g. FD30 or FD60, for fire doors classified under the national system, or E30 or E60 under the European system. The 30 or 60 indicates the minimum number of minutes the fire door can be expected to withstand if subjected to a fire test.



MANDATORY SIGNAGE

✓ Blue mandatory sign with white text on the door, such as:

- "Fire door keep shut" for doors that must be kept closed when not in use.
- "Fire door keep locked shut" for fire doors that must be kept locked when not in use, such as fire doors to plant rooms or riser cupboards
- "Automatic fire door keep clear" where the fire door is held open by an automatic release mechanism or free swing device and closes automatically in the event of a fire and must not be obstructed.

Guidance on the use of these mandatory safety signs is given in the HSE publication, Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 the relevant legislation can be found here.



Green and white emergency exit signage is needed **only if the door forms part of the escape route / final exit**, using standard fire exit symbols and directional arrows in line with. BS ISO 3864-1 and BS 5499-4.



Placement signs should be clear, legible, visible and unobstructed, and positioned so occupants can easily see them. The regulations stress suitable number and positioning, but they do not appear to prescribe a universal fixed mounting height such as "1.5 m to 2 m" in the legislation itself. [legislation.gov.uk], [hse.gov.uk]



Both sides of the door? Often yes in practice, especially where the instruction must be seen from either direction, but whether a sign is needed on both faces depends on the door's use and visibility and the fire risk assessment / guidance for the premises.

Please note: With the exception of fire doors to and within flats and dwellinghouses, and bedroom doors in hotels, halls of residence, hostels etc, all fire doors should be fitted with fire safety signs complying with BS 5499-5



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AUTOMATIC DOOR CLOSURE

Fire doors are only effective if they are closed. In many buildings such as hotels, offices, healthcare facilities and high-rise residential buildings you will usually see a mechanical overhead closer or a spring closer which is designed to hold the door open to allow easy access. In the event of a fire, the door is automatically released allowing it to perform as intended.



THREE OR MORE HINGES

Fire doors are heavy. They often require three hinges that are tested to withstand extreme heat without melting. Single axis hinges must be CE and UKCA marked and conform to BS EN 1935. Multi axis hinges can be CE marked if covered by a European Technical Assessment. Hinges are often third-party certified.



CONSISTENT GAPS

The gap between the door and the frame should be snug—typically between 2mm and 4mm. You can judge this gap using a standard £1 coin, which is roughly 3 mm thick.



SPECIALISED GLAZING

If the door has a glazed aperture, then the glass or glazing unit used must be, safety glass and provide fire resistance in terms of integrity and in some circumstances, insulation. The glass should be tested and classified under UK and European standards and should have a permanent stamp or etching in the corner of the pane detailing the manufacturers name, product standard and the impact safety rating. The glazing must offer the same level of fire resistance as the door leaf itself, i.e. for an FD30 door you need a minimum of 30 minute rated glass E30.

In some locations on escape routes the amount of glazing in a fire door will be limited unless it uses insulating glass.



INTUMESCENT SEALS

An intumescent seal is a critical passive fire safety component that expands dramatically when exposed to heat. Typically installed in the edges of fire door leaves or in the rebate platforms of door frames, and around the edges of fire rated glazing, they fill the operational gaps to prevent the spread of fire, smoke, and hot gases.



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FITTING ADDITIONAL HARDWARE

Fire doors are engineered to act as a barrier to the passage of fire. When an aperture is cut into the door leaf to receive additional hardware, e.g. a fire rated letter plate or a fire rated cat flap you compromise its integrity and prevent it from performing in the way it should. Not all door leaves are suitable to be fitted with additional hardware of this type which should only be installed if permitted by the fire door’s supporting evidence. You should only use a certified, competent fire door installer or a joiner holding recognised accreditations to modify a fire door.

5 things to check for fire door safety

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1. CERTIFICATION

Look for a label, a plug or similar marking to show that it’s certificated & follow the instructions. **IMPORTANT:** All ironmongery such as locks, latches, closers & hinges, **MUST** be CE marked & compatible with the door leaf’s certification.
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2. APERTURES

Altering the door for glazing apertures and air transfer grilles will make certification **VOID**.
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3. GAPS & SEALS

Check the gap around the door frame is constant and around 3 to 4 mm & CE Marked hinges are firmly fixed with no missing screws. Ensure seals are fitted at the top and sides of the door.
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4. CLOSERS

Check that the closer shuts the door onto the latch from any position – check from 75mm from the closed position.
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5. OPERATION

Ensure the door closes correctly around all parts of the frame.