

## **MHCLG Fire Doors FAQs for building owners**

### **Background**

#### **Why is MHCLG investigating the fire door industry?**

The government began investigating the fire door industry after it was found that a glazed, GRP<sup>1</sup> 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 panel<sup>2</sup>, 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 have industry carried out following the 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 market 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 (ACDM) to resolve problems of performance consistency across manufacturers, and
- Establish protocols to provide greater quality assurance of GRP composite fire doors.

This voluntary action is being monitored by trading standards and the department is closely tracking progress.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Glass Reinforced Plastic

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/building-safety-independent-expert-advisory-panel>

by this issue should review their fire risk assessment to determine how quickly affected doors should be replaced.

### **What action has Government taken as part of the investigation?**

Public safety is paramount. As soon as the Metropolitan Police informed MHCLG of the test result the department immediately sought the advice from its independent Expert Panel, which was appointed following the Grenfell Tower fire, and commissioned further tests on the manufacturer and wider GRP composite manufacturers.

When issues were identified with the consistency of fire-resistance performance of these doors, MHCLG immediately notified National Trading Standards and worked with the major door blank manufacturers to stop production and sale of any GRP composite door blanks within the United Kingdom with immediate effect, which consequently prevented any new GRP composite doors from entering the market.

Advice was issued by the independent Expert Panel on action that should be taken by building owners who have this type of door in their buildings. MHCLG also issued advice to industry on testing GRP composite doors.

MHCLG also gained industry commitment to remove from the market all GRP composite fire doors sold among their members until they could demonstrate that their product could consistently resist fire for the required 30-minute standard on both sides of the door.

MHCLG has continued to work with the NFCC, third-party certification bodies and National Trading Standards to raise standards across the market. The ACDM have committed to the department to developing an industry-led action plan for repair and replacement of fire doors which did not meet the required standard during testing.

The government has now moved its investigation to testing the timber fire doors market.

### **Which fire safety tests did the tested doors failed and what was the extent/nature of failure?**

Furnace tests have been conducted to BS 476:22 in a UKAS accredited test house. Glazed and solid GRP composite fire doors were tested from a range of manufacturers. Doors failed to meet the required standard for a variety of reasons.

### **What are the next steps for MHCLG's investigation?**

The independent expert advisory panel recommended the department continue an investigation into the wider fire door market. The investigation is currently testing the timber fire door market before reviewing whether further investigations are required.

## **Investigation**

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

- **What action is being taken on 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.

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 further 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: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-building-owners-on-assurance-and-replacing-of-flat-entrance-fire-doors](http://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](http://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.

## **Remediation**

### **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 should a building owner do if a building has both non-compliant fire doors and ACM<sup>3</sup> 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](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-safety-programme).

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<sup>3</sup> Aluminium Composite Material

**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 and the results of the GRP composite tests can be viewed on the building safety website.

**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 web address: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-building-owners-on-assurance-and-replacing-of-flat-entrance-fire-doors](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-building-owners-on-assurance-and-replacing-of-flat-entrance-fire-doors).

**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 fire 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.

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

The remediation of GRP composite fire doors is being led by the fire door industry. We are currently working with the Association of Composite Fire Door Manufacturers on a plan to ensure that doors are replaced where this is required.

**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 supplier's 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 considered 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.

## **What should residents do 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.

## **Where can I get further information about fire doors?**

If you have any further questions, please contact [firedoorsteam@communities.gov.uk](mailto:firedoorsteam@communities.gov.uk)

## **Policy and Building Standards**

### **Have the rules about GRP composite fire doors changed?**

The rules around fire doors have not changed and our investigation is on-going.

Building Regulations guidance is clear that fire 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 always have test evidence from both sides (two test specimens).

### **What is the official stance towards GRP composite doors?**

We want to ensure that all products on the market meet the necessary standards. We are working with the Association for Composite Door Manufacturers who have confirmed that all doors known to have failed to meet the necessary standard have been withdrawn from the market, and no product will go back to market that does not have furnace test evidence for both sides of the door and for each modification made.

Building owners should assure themselves that products being used in their buildings meet the appropriate standards.

**What is the future of fire doors post Hackitt review? Will there be a full review of fire door standards?**

We are working to implement the Hackitt review and published the implementation plan in December 2018:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/766002/BSP - implementation programme.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/766002/BSP_-_implementation_programme.pdf).

We are continuing to work with the industry to deliver an industry-led response to raise quality and standards across the market.

**What implications does the Government's proposed restriction on the use of desktop studies have for the use of global assessments?**

The Government has made clear in advice issued last summer that assessments in lieu of tests ('desktop studies') should not be used to prove the performance of GRP composite fire doors. Standards clearly state that primary tests should be carried out. Since then, the industry has removed from the market all GRP composite fire doors which could not demonstrate meeting the required standards with a furnace test on both sides of the door. The industry has also committed to only reintroducing GRP composite fire doors to the market where full test evidence is available.