



T: 0131-244 6533
E: stephen.garvin@gov.scot

Building Standards Managers
By email

18 September 2018

Dear Building Standards Manager

FIRE DOOR TESTS

On 6 August I wrote to advise you of the then current position regarding the sample testing of fire doors undertaken on behalf of the UK Government's Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and considerations to be taken into account when determining the adequacy of fire doors. Additional information has now been received from MHCLG and I can now provide you with an update. As such, this letter should be read in conjunction with my earlier letter.

To date MHCLG have only had tests carried out on 30 minute fire doors of composite construction, therefore the information and advice in my earlier letter relates to these types of doors. It is understood that MHCLG intend to commission a further programme of testing across the broader fire door market and I will, of course, keep you informed when further information and/or the test results become known.

The advice in my previous letter that test evidence presented in support of a specified period of fire resistance should demonstrate that any doorset has been tested from both sides was based on erroneous information. **I would now confirm that this advice relates to doorsets of composite construction only.**

As you will be aware, the guidance in Table 2.7 within Annex 2A of the Domestic Technical Handbook calls for both sides of a fire door to be tested. However, BS 476 Part 22, which covers the procedures for determining fire resistance on non-loadbearing elements, including fire doors, permits one side of an element only to be tested where:

- The test specimen is symmetrical (e.g. double swing doors with no stops), or
- The door is known to be exposed from only one side (e.g. lift doors), or
- The weakest direction can be clearly identified

BS EN 1634-1 provides similar advice on the appropriateness of testing from one side only within clause 13.4, however Annex C expands on the rationale for these rules and specifically excludes composite doors by stating that:

“Doorsets made from other [*i.e. not timber or metal*] or composite materials are specifically excluded from this annex as there is not sufficient evidence of their behaviour in fire to be able to provide guidance on the weakest side against fire attack”.

Although neither standard advises who should (or can) make a determination of the “weakest direction” both advise that the reason for this should be clearly stated in the report, so the inference is that it would be a representative of the test house.

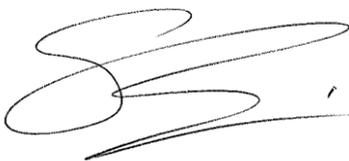
It is considered that clause 13.4, with reference to Annex C, represents the best available advice on this matter and it should be followed regardless of whether the doorset is being classified to BS 476-22 or BS EN 1634-1.

The following actions are strongly recommended to confirm that the appropriate tests have been applied to composite door:

- **Designers and specifiers** – seek assurance and evidence from their suppliers that the products they are specifying meet the appropriate standards.
- **Local Authority Verifiers** – Should satisfy themselves that products being used on a project meet the appropriate standards. Where there is any doubt or where the doorsets are particularly critical then they should request and review the test reports and not necessarily rely on manufacturer’s literature.
- **Test laboratories and Certification Schemes** – Should take note of this advice and ensure that their documentation clearly shows the nature of testing that has been used in order to support any classification and justification of the test methodology that has been used.

Any enquiries on this letter should be addressed to BFSResponse@gov.scot. BSD will continue to liaise closely with MHCLG and pass on any relevant emerging information.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Garvin
Head of Building Standards Division