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Building Standards Managers
By email

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Dear Building Standards Manager

FIRE DOOR TESTS

The purpose of this letter is to draw attention to issues about fire door tests.

Scope of this letter

The guidance in this letter applies to buildings and building work in Scotland.

Introduction

The UK Government's Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has been undertaking a series of tests of the performance of fire doors against the performance standards set out in Table B1 of Appendix B of Approved Document B (Fire Safety). Fire doors have been tested from 6 suppliers. Regrettably doors supplied by 5 of these firms have failed fire tests. The Scottish Government's Building Standards Division (BSD) is working closely with MHCLG.

Technical Handbooks – Section 2: Fire

The guidance in the Technical Handbooks – Section 2: Fire for Domestic and Non-Domestic buildings sets out the standards of fire resistance for fire doors. The test exposure for the fire door is *“Each side separately, when fitted in frame.”* The exception to this is lift doors.

MHCLG have advised that they have been made aware that some fire resisting door sets are being marketed on the basis of a single fire resistance test on one side of the door. Most door sets are not truly symmetrical and as such, testing on both sides is necessary to demonstrate compliance with the fire or smoke resistance performance required by Building Regulations. This is particularly the case for complex door constructions such as those found in double glazed and composite door sets.

Local Authority Building Standards verifiers are reminded of the guidance in the Annexes of the Technical Handbooks for Resistance to Fire which states:

“Any test evidence or assessment used to substantiate the fire resistance rating of a wall, floor, ceiling, door or shutter should be carefully checked to ensure that it demonstrates compliance with appropriate fire tests and performance criteria contained in this handbook and is applicable to the complete installed assembly... Similarly, fire doors may also have small differences in detail such as glazing apertures, intumescent strips, door frames and ironmongery etc which may significantly affect the rating.”

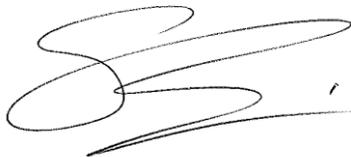
Given the public safety implications, Local Authority Building Standards verifiers should check that test evidence is presented of exposure to fire for both sides of the door, in order to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the Technical Handbooks.

MHCLG will be writing to test laboratories along similar lines to consider this advice carefully when advising their clients on what tests are necessary in order to demonstrate compliance with building regulations' guidance.

Enquiries

Any enquiries on this letter should be addressed BFSResponse@gov.scot. BSD will continue to liaise closely with the Ministry for Communities and Local Government and pass on any relevant emerging information.

Yours sincerely



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Head of Building Standards Division