INFORMATION SHEET

FIRE DOORS (FIRE RESISTANT DOORSETS)

Fire resistant doorsets, commonly called fire doors, are an integral component of fire protection in buildings and classified as passive fire protection systems. They are installed in walls constructed as fire barriers. Each fire door and the wall housing it, have a fire rating known as a fire resistant level.

Fire doors allow a passageway through fire resistant walls for building occupants. When closed, fire doors restrict the spread of smoke, flames, toxic gases and other effects of fire.

A fire door consists of a door leaf, doorframe and associated hardware such as closers, handles, locks, vision panels, air grills and matching fire door tags on the door and door frame. Fire doors are required to be self-closing and latching.

Security doors and fire doors of sole occupancy units

In buildings containing two or more separate units, each unit must be fire separated. This fire separation includes the installation of a fire door as the main entrance.

While security doors are not specifically identified in any technical document, the Australian Standard requires that all fittings to the fire doorset comply with the fire rating of that particular doorset.

Should fire doors be kept closed?

Most fire doors are kept closed at all times, however some doors are held open with magnetic devices and will shut automatically upon the activation of a smoke detector, fire alarm system, or sprinkler system. The movement (opening and closing) of a fire door must never be impaired by a door wedge/chock or other obstacle. The use of chocks in this manner is illegal and will incur a penalty.

If a unit owner wishes to have their fire door open, they should contact their service agent to install a device that, on the activation of a smoke detector in their unit, or in the common area of the building, will release the fire door allowing it to automatically close fully.

Does my building have fire doors?

To check if your building has fire doors or any other fire safety installations, you should look at the building's plans and specifications which were accepted as part of the building's approval. The building owner should have a copy of these plans and the building's Certificate of Classification. Alternatively, your local government should have a copy of the building's approval records in their files.

You can also contact a building certifier to confirm the requirements for the building. They will be able to identify your building's classification and provide advice on the prescribed fire safety installations by using the date of approval and the applicable legislation and codes.

Fire door maintenance

Under Section 104D of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* the occupier of a building must maintain every prescribed fire safety installation to a standard of safety and reliability in the event of fire. Fire doors are one such fire safety installation.

Fire doors must be maintained in accordance with Queensland Development Code (QDC) MP 6.1 which requires building fire safety installations are maintained by an appropriately qualified person at adequate intervals to ensure the building's fire safety installations perform to a standard no less than what they were originally required to meet. Schedule 1 of the QDC MP 6.1 schedule 1 provides specific maintenance schedules for each building class.

Penalties may apply for failure to maintain fire doors.

Visit the Department of Housing and Public Works website at www.hpw.qld.gov.au for more information.

What is an appropriately qualified person?

An appropriately qualified person is someone who holds a specific licence to carry out work on that particular prescribed fire safety installation. Their licence can only be issued by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC).

Queensland Government

A licensed carpenter or joiner can install and repair fire doors but they cannot certify, inspect or test these doors unless they hold the Passive Fire Protection-Fire Doors and Fire Shutters licence. Visit the QBCC website at www.qbcc.qld.gov.au for further information.

Hardware components on fire doors

All the hardware components associated with a fire door are key elements that combine to achieve the overall fire resistant level that the fire door complies with and is certified to. These components must be tested and approved by a registered testing authority.

Locksmith work involving installation and repairs on door components such as locks, closers, seals, hinges, etc. is exempt from the definition of building work and no licence is required.

What about asbestos in fire doors?

Some buildings constructed before January 1990 may have fire doors constructed with thermal insulation that is an asbestos containing material (ACM). ACMs are a health hazard. The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* detail the obligations of building owners for managing and removing ACM.

If a fire door is damaged to expose loose asbestos material, the material and door will need to be removed by an asbestos removalist who is certified by WorkCover Queensland.

For fire doors, where the asbestos is bonded or enclosed, the door must be entered onto an asbestos register for the building, have a suitable label to ensure maintenance workers are aware asbestos is present, and be managed through an asbestos management plan controlling maintenance work and other activities that could lead to the ACM being disturbed.

Further information about asbestos management is available by visiting www.worksafe.qld.gov.au of by contacting WorkCover Queensland 1300 362 128.

What signage do I need on my fire door?

Fire door signage needs to comply with the legislation requirements that applied when the building was approved. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) recommends that signage is installed to comply wiht the current Building Code of Australia (Part D2.23).

Visit ncc.abcb.gov.au for further information.

Do all fire doors require Tags?

Under the *Building Act 1975*, all buildings approved after 1 April 1976 require tags to be fitted to the fire doors. Fire doors that have been replaced after 1 April 1976 also require tags to be fitted.

Buildings approved before this date are not required to have tags fitted to the fire doors unless required by the local authority at the time of approval.

Fire doors need to be tagged in accordance with Australian Standard AS/NZS 1905.1-2005. The information on the tag must include:

- The component standard – AS/NZS 1905.1-2005
- Fire resistant Level – e.g. -/60/30
- Manufacturer's name (Company name)
- Applicant's name
- Certifier (Company name)
- Door tag number
- Year of manufacturing

What do I do if I have a Korab (pyrokor) fire door fitted in my building?

On 8 June 1999, then Commonwealth Minister for Financial Services and Regulation, the Honourable Joe Hockey MP issued a Media Release ordering the urgent compulsory product safety recall of up to 4,500 fire doors made using a pyrokor core and supplied between 1 January 1993 and 3 September 1998.

The Minister received information that the fire doors might not meet the requirements of the Building Code of Australia. Subsequent tests carried out on pyrokor fire doors obtained from public buildings confirmed the doors did not achieve the claimed fire resistance level ratings.

The fire doors were made and supplied by Theo Holdings Pty Ltd and Barok industries Pty Ltd (formally trading as Korab & Co Pty Ltd and Korab Industries Pty Ltd). The recall does not apply to fire doors supplied after 3 September 1998 by the new owner of the Korab company name.

These fire doors were supplied primarily in southern Queensland and northern New South Wales.