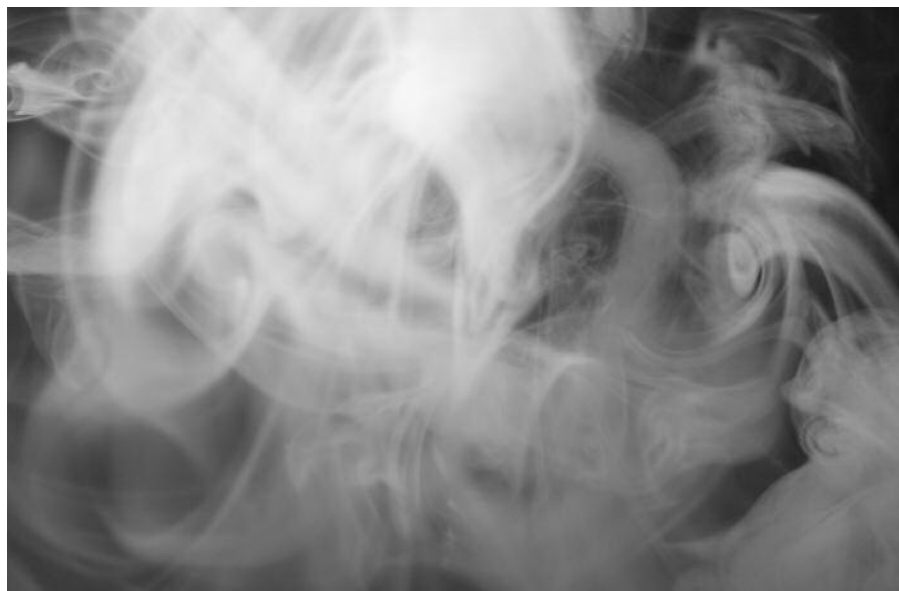


Clearing the smoke

WE GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE CHANGES TO PART B



What is Part B and Approved Document B?

The Building Regulations that apply to England and Wales are divided into Parts, with Part B specifically covering fire safety. Each Part has an associated Approved Document that provides guidance on how to achieve the requirements of the associated Part. Approved Document B (AD B) is the guidance document for Part B.

Approved Document B is updated approximately every six years, with the latest revision being published in December 2006 and coming into effect on 6th April 2007. This version has been divided into two sections to differentiate between domestic and non-domestic buildings, although flats are now considered non-domestic. The intention of publishing two volumes is to make it easier for smaller contractors to find the information they require. The points discussed below apply to either Part, except when a Part is specifically referenced.

Fire doors – *the important points*

Approved Document B covers all aspects of fire safety from structural stability in a fire to means of escape and stopping the spread of fire. Appendix B specifically relates to fire doors.

Performance requirements

Appendix B states that, “all fire doors should have the appropriate performance” for the ratings they carry and the best way of proving this is for the design to be tested to BS476-22 or the European equivalent EN1634. All tests or assessments of tests must be made by a United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accredited test facility.

Fire door ratings

The rating of a fire door is determined by reference to the period of time it can successfully hold back the spread of fire. A rating is shown with a FD in front of the rating period, measured in minutes. For example, a fire door with a 30 minute rating, which is the most commonly used in the UK, is shown as FD30. To be classified to a particular rating, the door design must achieve an integrity period equal to or exceeding the time claimed for that rating.

- The ratings covered in Approved Document B include 20min, 30min, 60min, 90min, 120min and 240min
- 30min, 60min, 90min & 120min rated fire doors are available in timber
- The suffix S indicates a smoke seal must be added, e.g. FD60S

Approved Document B refers to FD20 doors, however there are few specifically designed for that rating, so it is suggested that a FD30 is used instead, always with an intumescent seal.



CHANGES
TO PART B

CHANGES TO PART B

- Now in volumes 1 and 2
- Where fire doors are required
- When smoke seals are required
- Required ratings
- Changes to the requirements for self-closers
- Changes to the regulations for loft conversions
- New emphasis on certification schemes



Visit www.planningportal.gov.uk to download the full document.

BWF FDAS Fact Card No 11
March 2007

Where fire doors are required

Approved Document B recommends that buildings are divided into fire resisting compartments, with Passive Fire Protection products built into the walls, floors and ceilings to stop the spread of fire. A doorway must maintain the same level of fire resistance as the rest of the wall it is built into, which is why it is so important to install a fire door design that has been tested to ensure it will achieve the required rating. The locations where fire doors are required are listed in Appendix B of Approved Document B and consist mainly of locations where doors occur in compartment (fire resisting) walls.

When smoke seals are required

Smoke seals are required on fire doors to stop the spread of cold smoke, which is the biggest killer in a fire. Smoke seals can be purchased in a combination seal with intumescent and acoustics, or separately. Smoke seals are required to be fitted in the following situations:

- Between houses and integral garages
- Between flats and common areas
- Between common areas or escape routes and occupied or used areas, such as office spaces
- In protected lobbies and along escape routes
- Along sub-divided escape routes

When signs are required

Fire door signage is required on both sides of any door located in a public building and must indicate that the door is a fire door, as well as any other relevant instructions such as 'keep closed' or 'keep locked'. Standard signs are now readily available from leading fire door merchants.

Fire doors – *the main changes*

Certification

For the first time in Approved Document B, the latest revision has given positive support to product certification schemes. AD B states that "Building Control Officers may accept the certification of products... under such Schemes as evidence of compliance with the relevant standard."

Appendix B explains however that "any test evidence used to substantiate the fire resistance rating of a door should be carefully checked to ensure that it adequately demonstrates compliance that is applicable to the complete installed assembly. Small differences in detail such as glazing apertures, intumescent strips, door frames and ironmongery etc. may significantly affect the rating." This is a clear message that when installing a fire door, you must use the components identified in the installation instructions or the door could fail.

Self-closing devices

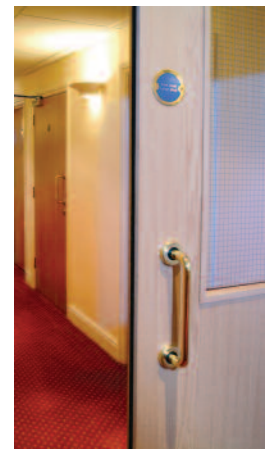
The latest revision to Approved Document B has withdrawn the recommendation for a closing device on fire doors in domestic situations, except between the kitchen and integral garage. For non-domestic buildings, including the entrance to flats, the recommendation for a self closing device remains. It is important to remember however, that doors need to remain shut if they are going to hold back the spread of fire.

Loft conversions

There has been a considerable change to the guidance for loft conversions with a recommendation that all doors leading on the escape shaft linking the loft conversion to a ground floor exit, usually the stair well, be replaced with fire doors. When replacing a standard door with a fire door, it is important to remember to also replace the frame and ironmongery with tested, fire rated products, and to add an intumescent seal.

Maintenance

It is now recommended that products such as fire doors are provided with instructions not just on installation, but also on maintenance.



Fire door signage is required on both sides of any door located in a public building.



When installing a fire door, the components identified in the installation instructions must be used to ensure certification.

