

NEWS RELEASE

Fire Door Safety Week 2015 Press Office:

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FIRE DOOR
SAFETY WEEK 14-20 SEPTEMBER 2015

75 Fire Safety Facts & Figures

Fire deaths, injuries and impacts

1. There is an average of 162 building fires in Great Britain every day, with more than 9,100 fatalities or casualties from those fires in 2013-14, about 25 a day. (Sources: collated Government fire statistics – see below ¹)
2. More than three quarters (80%) of all fire-related fatalities occurred in dwelling fires (including private homes, social and affordable housing). There were 39,139 dwelling fires in 2013-14 and 260 fatalities from those fires. (Source: as above)
3. There were an additional 19,874 fires recorded in buildings that were not dwellings. The majority of these occurred in buildings such as sheds, garages, shops, industrial units, pubs, cafes and restaurants. (Source: as above)
4. There was an estimated billion pound bill for fire-related property insurance claims in 2014. (Source: Association of British Insurers)
5. In 2014, London Fire Brigade reported that over the previous three years there had been three deaths and 36 people injured in fires in the capital where fire doors had been replaced, left open or incorrectly fitted. (Source: London Fire Brigade ²)

Awareness of fire safety responsibilities

6. In 2005, a new fire safety law came in to replace more than 70 pieces of previous legislation. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ³ – commonly known as

¹ All stats are for 2013/14, as 2014/15 figures are not yet published by all relevant authorities:

English fire statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-monitor-april-2014-to-march-2015>

Scottish fire statistics: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/2384>

Welsh fire statistics: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/fire-statistics/?lang=en>

The definitions of 'fatalities' and 'non-fatal casualties' are contained in these statistics reports.

² London Fire Brigade press release, September 2014: http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/AC1B4F18D05A4D82B52979C6465BBFE5_22804B80F85148BFBA15726034A0E9E5.asp#.VdW6tPIViko

³ Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents/made>

the Fire Safety Order or FSO – now firmly places responsibility for fire safety in buildings to whoever has day-to-day control of the premises.

7. However, awareness of fire safety duties is still low. When respondents with formal responsibility for fire safety in their organisations were asked in 2014 if they were fully aware of their legal obligations, almost half (46.5%) said they either did not know what they were, or admitted they were unclear. (Source: Atomik Research, August 2014 ⁴)
8. A similar proportion (45%) of people responsible for fire safety in their organisations say they really would not know how to spot a dodgy fire door – one of the most critical passive fire protection features in the buildings we use every day. (Source: Atomik Research, August 2014)

Fire safety where we work and play

9. Almost half of us (47%) have never been shown or told about the fire safety procedures where we work. (Source: Atomik Research, August 2014)
10. If a fire alarm was to sound, 14% of people say they would see what everyone else was doing and 'go with the flow' – this rises to almost 23% of workers aged 25-44. One in 10 people (11%) would go into the corridor and investigate, and one in 20 admit they would simply ignore it, assuming there must be a fault on the alarm system. (Source: Atomik Research, August 2014)
11. These figures are reinforced by recent research by Ironmongery Direct for Fire Door Safety Week 2015. Results from a poll of 1,000 UK employees revealed that many employees were not even aware of the steps they should take if the fire alarm was to sound. Nearly a quarter (22%) would look to see what everyone else was doing before taking action, 13% would just ignore it and carry on working and 4% would try and find the fire. (Source: Ironmongery Direct)
12. When asked about fire door safety, 53% admitted that they would not know how to spot a dodgy fire door and 28% didn't actually know that it was illegal to prop open a fire door without a specially designed device approved by the fire authority. (Source: Ironmongery Direct)
13. In the Ironmongery Direct survey, only 47% of respondents were aware that their employer carried out regular fire risk assessments - which are in fact a legal requirement. 24% said that they weren't aware of regular risk assessments and 29% didn't know either way. (Source: Ironmongery Direct)
14. It's not just small businesses that are vulnerable to fire safety failures. In 2009, one of the most expensive fines under the Fire Safety Order was given to multinational oil and gas company Shell International for significant failings in fire safety at the Shell Centre in central London. The energy giant pleaded guilty to three breaches of the

⁴ Survey carried out 27-29 August 2014 by Atomik Research on behalf of the BWF-CERTIFIRE Scheme. The sample consisted of two groups: a 500 individuals group responsible for fire safety in a variety of organisations, and a 500 consumers group aged 18-65 and nationally representative.

FSO, including defective fire doors, and was fined £300,000. (Source: London Fire Brigade ⁵)

15. In 2013-14 there were 2,200 fires recorded at restaurants, cafes, pub/wine bars and take-aways. (Source: Gov.uk)

Fire safety in student accommodation

16. People living in rented or shared accommodation are seven times more likely to have a fire. (Source: West Midlands Fire Service ⁶)
17. The vast majority (81%) of university students regularly undertake activities that risk fire in their halls or accommodation. (Source: Zurich Insurance ⁷)
18. Every year, around 350 18-24 year olds are injured in accidental house fires started by cigarettes, smoking materials and candles. More than half of all accidental fire deaths among this age group occur in the kitchen when cooking, when handling hot substances or through misuse of electrical equipment. (Source: Plumis ⁸)
19. Other figures from 2012 suggest how prevalent fires are in student halls of residence. There were 514 fires recorded across student accommodation in Great Britain in 2012. (Source: Zurich Insurance)
20. As an example of the sorts of incidents that happen, around 60 students were evacuated from Royal Holloway's Kingswood Halls in London in November 2014, following the third student accommodation fire in a week. (Source: Get Surrey ⁹)

Fire safety checks by families

21. A dodgy fire door is a sure sign of an unsafe building generally, yet two thirds of parents with children living away from home admit that even they would not know what to look for. (Source: Atomik Research, September 2015 ¹⁰)
22. In a survey of a thousand parents with children living away from home in a rented property, shared house or student accommodation, nearly half (46%) of respondents cited furniture blocking doorways and corridors as visual clues which would most

⁵ London Fire Brigade press release, 2 June 2009: http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/NewsReleases2009_PR1119.asp

⁶ West Midlands Fire Service: <http://www.wmfs.net/content/rented-accomodation-and-high-rise-safety>

⁷ Zurich Insurance press release, 2013: <http://www.zurich.co.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2013/insurance/article230913a.htm>

⁸ Plumis website: <http://www.plumis.co.uk/student.html>

⁹ Get Surrey, 27 November 2014: <http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/third-royal-holloway-student-accommodation-8185951>

¹⁰ Survey carried out in September 2015 by Atomik Research for Fire Door Safety Week 2015. The sample consisted of 1,002 parents with a child living away from home in a rented property, shared house or student accommodation.

likely make them think that a building had poor fire safety. A further 38% said it would be old electrics or heating systems and 29% said they were most wary of buildings with no visible fire extinguishers. Damaged doors or internal doors wedged open were only mentioned by 23% and 22% respectively. (Source: Atomik Research, September 2015)

23. More than half of parents in the 2015 survey (54%) correctly identified what an 'internal fire door' looked like when shown a photograph, but 15% thought it was a 'normal door' and one in ten thought it was a security door. (Source: Atomik Research September 2015)
24. According to the research, mothers are twice as likely as fathers to admit they would have no idea what a faulty fire door looks like. (Source: Atomik Research September 2015)
25. More than half (51%) correctly knew that it is the property owner or landlord's responsibility to check fire doors. A fifth (20%) incorrectly thought it was up to the residents themselves. (Source: Atomik Research September 2015)
26. Almost three in ten families (29%) admit that neither they nor their child checked a property's fire safety before they rented or moved in. (Source: Atomik Research September 2015)
27. Yet only a quarter (25%) of the 2015 research respondents felt very confident that their family member knew about fire safety where they lived, as they had been given fire training or instructions. (Source: Atomik Research September 2015)
28. A fifth (20%) of respondents had little, if any, confidence at all in their family member's living companions' fire safety awareness. A further 16% were completely unaware of whether they had any knowledge of fire safety at all. (Source: Atomik Research September 2015)

Fire safety in private rented housing

29. All these statistics have extra poignancy given the tragic story of Julian Rosser's daughter, Sophie, who died in a fire in a block of flats in London's Canary Wharf in August 2012. An inquest heard that Ms Rosser's death could have been avoided if a self-closing fire door had not become stuck on the floor preventing it from closing. (More information: BBC Wales ¹¹)
30. In 2013, a Kettering landlord was jailed for nine months following a fire at one of his properties which killed a young boy, and two people who acted as property managers for the landlord received suspended prison sentences and fines. There were no fire doors at the property, and investigators found further fire safety failings at eight other properties he owned. (Source: Daily Mail ¹²)

¹¹ BBC website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-29213648>

¹² Daily Mail, 26 September 2014: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2433332/Landlord-Ajit-Singh-jailed-boy-died-inactive-smoke-detector.html>

31. Following a fire at a property in Blackpool in July 2012, landlord Graham Sawings was prosecuted by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and fined £36,000. The three storey house was made up of three separate dwellings and significant fire safety offences were uncovered, including fire doors not closing properly. (Source: Staylegal.net ¹³)
32. Private landlords will have to fit working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their properties following a change in the law due to be introduced in October 2015. The new regulations will require landlords to install smoke alarms on every floor of their property and test them at the start of every tenancy.

Fire safety in social housing

33. The UK's worst tower block fire was at Southwark's Lakanal House on 3 July 2009. Six people lost their lives, including three children, and more than 20 people were injured. (More information: Inside Housing 'Safe as Houses' reports ¹⁴)
34. It's not just older buildings at risk. A potential tragedy was averted by a campaign by local residents, their MP and the responsible approach to fire safety by Stoke-on-Trent City Council in 2013, following the discovery of faulty fire doors at 11 apartment blocks in the city. The Council published an independent report listing problems with up to 66 of the doors inspected which had all been newly installed within the previous 18 months. (Source: BBC, August 2013 ¹⁵)
35. There were 23 fire safety enforcement notices issued in London alone to housing associations in 2014/15. (Source: Inside Housing, April 2015 ¹⁶)
36. There was a 44% increase in fire safety inspections of tower blocks by London Fire Brigade in 2014/15 compared to the year before. (Source: Inside Housing, April 2015)

Fire safety in care homes

37. The fire fatality rate in Great Britain is more than four times higher for people aged 80 and over, compared to the rate across all ages. (Source: Gov.uk)
38. In 2013/14 there were 527 fires in care homes and sheltered accommodation in London, resulting in two deaths and 34 injuries. (Source: London Fire Brigade)
39. Just days after Fire Door Safety Week had finished last year, a £170,622 fine was imposed on England's largest social landlord for older people following a fatal fire at Rose Court, Bermondsey. (Source: Fire Safety Services ¹⁷)

¹³ Top 25 expensive fines for fire safety breaches, Staylegal.net, 13 April 2015: <http://www.staylegal.net/top-25-expensive-fines-fire-safety-breaches/>

¹⁴ Inside Housing: <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/safe-as-houses/50748.subject>

¹⁵ BBC news, 17 August 2013: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-stoke-staffordshire-23738142>

¹⁶ Inside Housing, 23 April 2015: <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/london-burning/7009301.article>

¹⁷ Fire Safety Services, 24 September 2014: <http://firesafetyservices.co.uk/another-care-home-fined-170k-fire-safety-breaches/>

40. Fire safety inspectors found "truly shocking" safety failings at Morven House near Croydon which led to a fine of almost £70,000 for the care home company in May 2014. The case came just one week after the Brigade released figures showing that there were 10 fires a week in the capital's care homes and that a third of the people who died in accidental fires in London last year were receiving care services. (Source: London Fire Brigade ¹⁸)
41. A Paignton care home owner has recently been fined £19,500 and was ordered to pay more than £5,000 costs for "very, very serious offences" which included fire doors damaged or with missing self-closing devices. (Source: Fire Protection Association ¹⁹)
42. The owners of a Derbyshire care home for the mentally disabled were fined more than £27,000 in February 2015 for several breaches of the Fire Safety Order, including fire doors wedged open, self-closing door devices removed, damaged and ill-fitting fire doors. (Source: Derbyshire Times ²⁰)
43. In January 2004, 14 people died in a fire at Rosepark care home in Scotland. Residents in bedrooms along two corridors were exposed to high concentrations of toxic gases. Experts reported that, while some bedroom doors in the affected corridors were fitted with self-closing devices, some had been removed or disconnected, or were intact but the doors were wedged open. Investigators concluded that if the cupboard where the fire started had been fitted with fire doors that were kept closed and with no internal ventilation, the fire would probably have self-extinguished. In addition, if fire-resisting doors in the affected areas had been closed, they would have withstood the fire in the corridor for a period sufficient for the blaze to die back from lack of air, with no penetration into bedrooms. Scottish Building Regulations concerning care homes have since been changed. (Source: FRM Journal ²¹)

Fire safety in hotels

44. The first jury trial of a case under the Fire Safety Order related to a hotel. In February 2012, a landmark trial at Blackfriars Crown Court led to £210,000 fines for a Finchley hotel and its director. Fire safety breaches included faulty fire doors. (Source: London Fire Brigade ²²)

¹⁸London Fire Brigade press release, 28 May 2014: http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/AC1B4F18D05A4D82B52979C6465BBFE5_Croydoncarehomeslapped.asp#.VdXvHPiViko

¹⁹ Fire Protection Association e-newsletter, August 2015: http://www.frmjournal.com/news/news_detail.owner-fined-for-care-home-failings.html?utm_campaign=August%20Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_source=August%20Newsletter&utm_content=August%20Newsletter

²⁰ Derbyshire Times, 20 February 2015: <http://www.derbyshiretimes.co.uk/news/grassroots/fire-safety-breaches-at-derbyshire-care-home-1-7117331>

²¹ FRM Journal, 1 February 2012: http://www.frmjournal.com/frm-issues/frm-issues_detail.rosepark-revisted.html?tkn=166101DD-6644-4675-A472A97CD5D3EBC4

45. In March 2015, a London hotel owner received a similar massive fine of £200,000, plus £30,000 court costs and a suspended prison sentence for huge fire safety violations, including fire doors tied open with string. (Source: Daily Mail ²³)
46. In 2012, the owner of Tantons Hotel in Bideford, Devon pleaded guilty to five offences under the Fire Safety Order, including faulty fire doors, and received a £40,000 fine. A fire at the hotel in May 2011 led to 55 people being evacuated, including four people who were trapped on the roof of the building and had to be rescued. (Source: BBC, September 2012 ²⁴)
47. Only 51% of us say we would look at the fire safety procedures on the back of a hotel bedroom door and familiarise themselves with the exit route. 13% say they never do this and hadn't even thought about it. (Source: Atomik Research, August 2014)
48. Websites like TripAdvisor receive millions of reviews and opinions from guests about their hotel experiences, but it is clear that going public on fire safety concerns is not yet something everyone would consider. When asked whether they would report their concerns about dodgy fire doors in a building they were using, only 70% of respondents said they always would. When asked if they would post pictures of dodgy fire doors in hotels and B&Bs onto TripAdvisor or social media to warn others, a third (32%) of respondents said they probably would not. (Source: Atomik Research, August 2014)
49. Unfortunately, fire safety reports are not encouraged. In 2014 ex-fireman Alan Cox was told he would be banned from putting hotel reviews on TripAdvisor if he continued to highlight potential fire risks. (Source: FDIS ²⁵)
50. In 2012, a group of experienced fire door professionals and safety experts secretly checked a group of 17 hotels in Liverpool, Sheffield, Birmingham and Manchester. The researchers found problems in almost every one. The five most common problems spotted in these hotels were:
- Ill-fitting doors in frames - 59% (10 hotels)
 - Damaged fire doors - 47% (8 hotels)
 - Fire doors propped open - 47% (8 hotels)
 - Incorrectly fitted fire and/or smoke seals- 35% (6 hotels)
 - Poor condition of fire and/or smoke seals - 35% (6 hotels)
- (Source: FDIS ²⁶)

²² London Fire Brigade press release, 8 February 2012: http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/ODA45C1B1DC14505A4FA14A3D18EFBA0_PR2940.asp#.VdX2g_IViko

²³ Daily Mail, 13 March 2015: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-2993090/Former-London-hotel-owner-hit-record-200-000-fine-fire-safety-violations.html

²⁴ BBC, 20 September 2012: http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/ODA45C1B1DC14505A4FA14A3D18EFBA0_PR2940.asp#.VdX2g_IViko

²⁵ FDIS press release, 2014: <http://fdis.co.uk/2014/tripadvisor-threatens-ban-for-fireman-sounding-the-alarm-on-fire-safety-breaches>

²⁶ FDIS press release, 2012: <http://fdis.co.uk/2012/hotel-fire-doors-yet-more-evidence-of-our-safety-in-jeopardy>

Fire safety in hospitals

51. Many hospitals, like care homes, have a 'defend in place' policy as part of their fire strategy in order to reduce the impact of building evacuations. They may also be built around a progressive horizontal evacuation system, so that patients can be moved progressively sideways away from a fire rather than taken outside the building. This is why hospitals rely especially on fire doors providing the intended fire separation.
52. In an example of how serious such risks can be, a fire at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in May 2013 caused 53 patients to flee for safety, involved 40 firefighters and resulted in several people being treated for smoke inhalation. (Source: Bucks Herald ²⁷)
53. Earlier this year, Britain's first PFI privately funded NHS hospital was denounced as a major fire safety risk. An independent report commissioned by the NHS Trust into fire precautions found that fire proofing materials had been used which did not meet the required 60 minute protection standard to allow for safe evacuation and prevent any fire from spreading in the building. (Source: ITV, June 2015 ²⁸)
54. Hospitals across England were urged to review their fire safety measures in 2013 after publication of the damning report into fire safety standards following a major blaze at the Woodlands Unit at Ipswich Hospital in 2011, during which firefighters had to force their way through locked fire doors to reach a young patient who was overcome by smoke. (Source: Building Better Healthcare ²⁹)
55. In 2013, shocking secret filming by fire safety campaigner 'Theodore Firedoor'³⁰ exposed the extent of fire door failures at a major city hospital.

Fire safety in schools and colleges

56. In 2014, the owner of one of Britain's top independent schools, Abbey College in Malvern, Worcestershire, was fined £24,000 for fire safety breaches including faulty fire doors in the student sleeping areas.(Source: Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service ³¹)
57. Arson remains a continuing concern for many schools. 3% of all deliberate fires in Great Britain in 2013-14 were in schools. (Source: Gov.uk)

²⁷ Bucks Herald, 4 June 2013: <http://www.bucks herald.co.uk/news/more-news/stoke-mandeville-hospital-fire-first-pictures-from-scene-of-blaze-1-5156886>

²⁸ ITV, 1 June 2015: <http://www.itv.com/news/border/2015-06-01/fire-safety-concerns-at-cumberland-infirmary/>

²⁹ Building Better Healthcare, 14 February 2013: http://www.buildingbetterhealthcare.co.uk/news/article_page/Hospitals_told_to_step_up_fire_security_after_scathing_report_into_Ipswich_blaze/86061

³⁰ Theodore Firedoor video: <https://youtu.be/AhngAXcOGkU>

³¹ HWF&R website, 16 January 2014: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk/news/2014-01-16-college-owner-fined-for-breach-of-fire-regulations>

Fire safety in newbuild projects

58. Fire safety is covered by Part B of the Building Regulations in England and Wales, and similar regulations in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
59. When a building is erected or extended, converted or has undergone a major refurbishment, the Fire Safety Order may apply to that building or extension. Regulation 38 of the Building Regulations then requires a package of fire safety information to be put together by the contractor and given to the building owner.

About fire doors

60. Fire protection systems in buildings range from inbuilt (passive) fire protection to sprinklers and fire alarms. Fire doors are one of the most critical elements of passive fire protection, used to provide compartmentation – in other words, containing fire and smoke for a period of time to allow people to be safely rescued and evacuated.
61. There are about 3 million new fire doors bought and installed every year in the UK, the vast majority made from timber. (Source: British Woodworking Federation)
62. Fire doors are often the first line of defence in a fire and their correct specification, maintenance and management can be the difference between life and death for building occupants. However, they remain a significant area of neglect, often the first thing to be downgraded on a specification and mismanaged throughout their service life, propped open, damaged and badly maintained.
63. A review undertaken by FDIS certificated fire door inspectors earlier this year revealed the extent of fire door failures being seen on site:
 - Over 61% of fire doors inspected had problems with fire or smoke seals
 - More than a third had incorrect signage
 - 230 fire doors inspected had gaps bigger than 3mm between door and frame
 - More than 20% had unsuitable hinges
 - Almost 1 in 6 had damage to the door leaf(Source: FDIS ³²)
64. The most common identified cause of death from a fire incident is being overcome by gas, smoke or toxic fumes. Suffering from the effects of gas or smoke also accounted for one-fifth of all non-fatal casualties in 2013-14. (Source: Gov.uk) This reinforces the importance of properly specified, installed and maintained fire doors with intumescent seals that keep smoke from leaking around the edges of a fire door.
65. In the 2015 Fire Door Safety Week research, more than a third (36%) of respondents admitted to wedging open or removing an automatic mechanism for closing a fire door because the door has annoyed them. This rose to over 60% of respondents aged 35-54. (Source: Atomik Research, September 2015)
66. While thankfully 46% of people (mostly the over 55s) said they'd have the common sense to close it, one in five respondents (20%) said that if they spotted a fire door wedged open they would leave it open. (Source: Atomik Research, September 2015)

³² FDIS press release: <http://fdis.co.uk/latest-news/third-year-report-on-fire-door-safety-warns-of-sleepwalking-into-danger>

About Fire Door Safety Week

67. Fire Door Safety Week was created in 2013 by the BWF, BWF-CERTIFIRE Scheme and the UK's Fire Door Inspection Scheme (FDIS) – see below. More than 280 organisations have supported Fire Door Safety Week since the launch of the campaign.
68. The total reach of the campaign in 2014 was 12.5 million people – an increase of 108% on the 2013 campaign.
69. There were 7,500 views of the fire safety video on YouTube, and a similar number of visits to the Fire Door Safety Week website.
70. In 2014, there were more than 2,600 mentions for Fire Door Safety Week on Twitter, creating more than 1.1 million impressions – up seven-fold on the previous year.
71. Fire Door Safety Week won this year's Best Practice Award for digital campaign of the year at the Trade Association Forum awards. It was also a finalist in IFSEC's Security & Fire Excellence awards 2014.

About the founders of Fire Door Safety Week

72. The BWF-CERTIFIRE Fire Door and Doorset Scheme is part of the British Woodworking Federation (BWF). It was established almost 20 years ago by a group of prime fire door manufacturers to increase the standard of timber fire doors in the UK.
73. BWF-CERTIFIRE Scheme members now supply more than 75% of the fire doors installed in the UK, and has been responsible for the successful third-party certification and labelling of more than 26 million fire doors.
74. The Fire Door Inspection Scheme (FDIS) provides online learning education modules leading to a diploma and independent assessment and certification for fire door inspectors.
75. FDIS was Europe's first qualification specifically aimed at transforming people's knowledge about fire doors. It currently has more than 700 people registered.