



34. Fire - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Fire Doors Integrity & Gaps Check

Category:	Fire
Subcategory:	Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes
Frequency:	Monthly
Status:	Statutory
Type:	Competent Person
Priority:	Core
Commonality:	Common

Note: This document provides guidance to support compliance but is not a substitute for professional advice.

Why This Task Matters

Your monthly checks of fire door integrity ensure that these critical barriers maintain their protective function amid the daily wear and tear of educational environments. By identifying issues early in busy schools and colleges where doors are frequently used, you prevent potential fire safety failures that could endanger lives. Your systematic monitoring of these essential safety barriers demonstrates your vital role in maintaining continuous fire compartmentation.

Task Summary

Statutory: Monthly in-house checks confirm fire doors close fully, latch securely, and maintain proper smoke and fire seals. This routine inspection involves checking door operation, verifying self-closing mechanisms, inspecting for damage or obstructions, and measuring door gaps. In busy schools and colleges, fire doors are frequently wedged open or damaged by high pupil traffic. These checks provide early detection of issues that would compromise fire safety before the next contractor inspection. The inspection includes checking all fire doors, documenting any problems, and ensuring immediate corrective actions. Evidence produced includes logbook entries documenting all doors checked and findings, annotated photos showing door conditions or issues identified, and records of any immediate repairs or adjustments made.

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:** Requires fire doors to be maintained in good working order
- **Fire Safety: Approved Document B (Buildings other than dwellinghouses):** Provides guidance on fire door maintenance
- **British Standard BS 9999: Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice:** Includes guidance on fire door inspection
- **Building Regulations 2010:** Require fire doors to meet specific standards
- **British Standard BS 8214: Code of practice for fire door assemblies:** Specifies requirements for fire door inspection and maintenance

Typical Frequency

Fire doors must be checked monthly for integrity and gaps, with these routine inspections continuing throughout the academic year. In educational settings, monthly checks are essential for maintaining fire door functionality. The frequency cannot be reduced as it is a statutory requirement for ensuring fire safety barriers remain effective.

Applicability

This task applies to all educational establishments with fire doors, which is common in virtually all schools and colleges. It is a core statutory task essential for maintaining fire compartmentation. The task applies to all premises with fire-rated doors in escape routes and compartment boundaries.

Responsible Persons

- **Task Type:** Competent Person
- **In-House Requirements:** This task can be completed by trained facilities staff or fire safety officers who have received appropriate training in fire door inspection. Staff should be familiar with fire door operation and normal appearance.
- **Permit to Work:** No permit to work is typically required for this inspection task.
- **Delivery Model:** Normally completed in-house by trained staff to ensure regular inspection and familiarity with the building.

Key Considerations

- **Timing considerations:** Schedule during term time to maintain continuous monitoring
- **Cost implications:** Minimal cost if completed in-house, though may require occasional staff training

- **Resource requirements:** Access to all fire doors and basic measuring tools
- **Potential disruption:** Minimal disruption as this is primarily a visual inspection
- **Risk assessment requirements:** Inspection results should inform the fire risk assessment

Task Instructions

Prerequisites & Safety

- Ensure inspector is familiar with fire door operation and requirements
- Confirm access to all fire doors and surrounding areas
- Check that inspection can be conducted safely in building areas
- Ensure familiarity with emergency procedures if issues are found

Tools & Materials

- Fire door register and location records
- Gap measuring tool or template
- Logbook for recording inspection results
- Camera for documenting door conditions
- Pen for recording observations

Method (Step-by-Step)

Phase A: Pre-Inspection Preparation

1. Review fire door register and previous inspection records
2. Gather inspection checklist and documentation forms
3. Prepare measuring tools and camera
4. Confirm access to all fire door locations

Phase B: Visual Inspection

1. Check door leaf for damage, warping, or deterioration
2. Inspect frame and architrave for integrity
3. Examine intumescent strips and smoke seals
4. Verify signage and identification labels
5. Assess surrounding area for obstructions

Phase C: Functional Testing

1. Test self-closing mechanism operation

2. Verify door closes fully and latches securely
3. Check for unauthorized hold-open devices
4. Test manual closing and latching
5. Confirm no obstructions prevent proper closure

Phase D: Gap Measurement

1. Measure gaps around door perimeter (sides and top)
2. Check threshold gap beneath door
3. Verify gaps meet requirements (max 4mm sides/top, 8mm threshold)
4. Document any excessive gaps

Phase E: Documentation

1. Record inspection date, time, and staff conducting inspection
2. Document condition of all doors and measurements taken
3. Photograph doors showing issues or damage
4. Note any immediate repairs or adjustments made
5. Sign and date the logbook entry

Measurements & Acceptance Criteria

- Door gaps must not exceed 4mm at sides and top, 8mm at threshold
- Doors must close fully and latch securely
- Self-closing mechanisms must operate correctly
- No unauthorized hold-open devices should be present

If Results Fail

Follow instructions on the Compliance Pod task completion form to record remedial/follow up actions and generate Reactive Task Tickets as required. Immediately secure any doors that don't close properly. Escalate significant issues to facilities management and arrange urgent repairs. Implement temporary fire safety measures for affected areas.

Reinstatement & Housekeeping

Restore any doors adjusted during inspection to proper operation. Ensure doors remain secure after inspection.

Completion Checks

Verify that the logbook entry is complete with all required details. Confirm that photographic evidence shows door conditions. Ensure any issues are clearly documented for follow-up.

Record-Keeping & Evidence

- **Upload Process:** Upload any required statutory or supporting evidence to the corresponding task form in Compliance Pod.
- **Statutory Evidence:** Logbook entry and annotated photos must be retained for at least 3 years.
- **Supporting/Good Practice Evidence:** Detailed inspection observations and photographic records support audit readiness.

Common Pitfalls & Best Practice Tips

- **Common mistakes to avoid:** Not measuring gaps accurately, missing subtle damage, or failing to document observations with photographs
- **Best practices for efficient completion:** Maintain consistent inspection schedules, keep detailed records of previous checks, and train multiple staff members
- **Pro tips for educational settings:** Include door checks in routine building maintenance patrols, use inspection as an opportunity to reinforce door awareness training, and maintain clear records of normal door conditions
- **Warning signs that indicate problems:** Doors that don't self-close, excessive gaps, or signs of tampering

Quick Reference Checklist

- Fire door register and previous records reviewed
- All fire doors identified and accessed
- Door operation and self-closing tested
- Gaps measured and verified within limits
- Damage or obstructions identified
- Immediate repairs or adjustments made
- Inspection results documented with photos
- Evidence uploaded to Compliance Pod

Grouped Tasks

This task is not normally grouped with other tasks.

Related Tasks

- Fire - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Fire Doors Full Inspection

- Fire - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Fire Dampers Full Service & Inspection
- Fire - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Disabled Refuge Full Service & Inspection
- Fire - Passive Fire Protection & Escape Routes - Means of Escape & Final Exit Doors Inspection

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Users must ensure that all tasks are carried out in line with current legislation, manufacturer instructions, site-specific risk assessments, and organisational policies. Where necessary, professional advice should be sought from competent and accredited specialists — for example, fire risk assessors, water hygiene consultants, electrical engineers, gas safety contractors, or health and safety advisors.