

DOOR CLOSER SAFETY

10 POINT CHECKLIST

The UK Government has issued [building safety advice](#) for building owners on the measures they should take to ensure their buildings are safe. This advice included specific information on fire doors. In [Annex A](#), which provides advice on assurance and assessment of flat entrance fire doors it states the following:

“It is important that all fire doors, including the compulsory closers, are routinely maintained by a suitably qualified professional. Residents should be made aware of the importance of a working self-closing device on all fire doors which under any circumstances should not be altered.”

The inquiry in to the Grenfell Tower disaster also gave rise to the following recommendation from its author Sir Martin Moore-Bick that checks be carried out *“at not less than three-monthly intervals to ensure that all fire doors are fitted with effective self-*

closing devices in working order.” However, it is important to note that in some environments, more frequent checks may be necessary and should form part of the building’s compliant risk assessment.

To assist those involved in the routine maintenance of door closing devices, the Guild of Architectural Ironmongers has prepared a ten-point checklist as below, which:

- Provides some appropriate recommendations on what to check on the door closing device itself.
- Details how to assess other factors which could impinge on the closer’s ability to perform its correct operation.
- Provides further recommendations on these matters.

NOTE: A self-closing device is defined in Approved Document B (the Building regulation in England covering fire safety matters within and around buildings) as “A device that closes a door, when open at any angle, against a door frame.”



DOOR CLOSING DEVICE

On initial visual inspection the closer should be assessed and the following should be checked to ensure it is in full working order:

- Is the closer correctly attached to the door and frame?
- Is the closer body free from damage?
- Are the arms of the closer fully engaged and working smoothly?
- Are all fixing screws in to the door and frame fully tightened?
- Are there any visible signs of the closer leaking?

If, on performing this inspection it is noted that the door closing device cannot be adjusted to allow it to function correctly, or if it is evident that the unit itself no longer works properly, then GAI strongly recommend immediate action.

The device should be replaced with a BS EN 1154 CE Marked adjustable powered unit of equal, or where necessary, of a higher quality than the one already on the door. Any replacement units should also possess evidence that it is certificated for this particular type of fire door.



OPERATION OF DOOR

The door closer has a profound effect on the smooth operation of a fire door therefore the following should also be assessed:

- Is the door easily operated and easily opened up to at least 70 degrees?
- Does the door close and fully engage the latch when opened to 5 degrees or 75mm?
- Does the door close at a suitable/safe speed? (Note that the door closing fully against the frame within 25 seconds is deemed to be good practice, but please verify this against any existing risk assessments for the building)
- Is there anything present (such as a door wedge) which would impede the door from closing fully into its frame? If so, this should be removed and NEVER be used to hold open a fire door - Please note that the only device which should be used to hold a fire door open is an electro-magnetic device which is connected to an automatic fire alarm system.
- Are there other elements of hardware such as hinges, striking plates or intumescent seals present which are preventing the door closing fully in to its frame? If so, they will require immediate adjustment or replacement.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Self-closing fire doors must be retained in the closed position, and occupants should continually be made aware of this.
- Occupants who notice any issues which could hamper the correct and safe operation of a fire door, should immediately contact the building operator or manager
- Further information on hardware for fire doors, including detail on maintenance can be found in the Code of Practice: Hardware for Fire and Escape doors (www.firecode.org.uk).
- In addition to the visual inspections outlined above, building operators or managers should also satisfy themselves that the door closing devices have sufficient test evidence and are fit for their intended purpose.
- An operational inspection such as this does not constitute a full fire door inspection and the GAI strongly recommend a full and regular inspection regime in relation to fire doors from a fully qualified inspector such as those qualified under the Fire Door Inspection Scheme (FDIS).
- It is important that doors can be easily operated by occupants in normal daily usage. This includes ease of opening to allow the door to be opened in an accessible manner, as well as the speed and force of closing as a door which closes too quickly and/or forcibly can cause injury to users. Correct adjustment of the closing device will reduce the risk of door closers being removed or doors being wedged open by users.