

Fire Door Safety Week: what we learned, and why it is more important than ever in 2018

An Introduction to Fire Door Safety Week



The Fire Door Safety Week campaign was launched in 2012 and has steadily grown in terms of reach and impact.

In 2017 it reached over 19 million people, delivering messages on the importance of fire doors in saving lives and protecting property, and landlords' legal responsibilities for managing fire door safety.

The campaign, is run annually by the [British Woodworking Federation \(BWF\)](#), [BWF-Certifire scheme](#), the newly formed BWF Fire Door Alliance and [the Fire Door Inspection Scheme \(FDIS\)](#) and works closely with the Home Office's National Fire Safety campaign (formerly Fire Kills).

The campaign was awarded the Safety and Health Excellence Campaign of the Year in 2017, beating off stiff competition from the aerospace, automotive and construction sector.

The Aim of Fire Door Safety Week

The Campaign focusses on:

- **Raising awareness of the critical role of fire doors**, drawing attention to a legacy of neglect and specific concerns related to product selection, installation and maintenance.
- Encourage building owners and users to **check the operation and condition of their fire doors** and to report those that aren't satisfactory.
- **Link together** the initiatives of many organisations with common interests in the fire door and passive fire protection industries.
- **Engage and educate** people, helping the whole building industry and every property owner to understand the correct specification, supply, installation, operation, inspection and maintenance of fire doors.

With over 4 million new fire doors bought and installed every year in the UK, the vast majority made from timber, 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.

Engagement in Fire Door Safety Week

2017's Fire Door Safety Week attracted its highest number of supporters ever, including [273 organisations](#) from all parts of social housing, the private rented housing sector, the construction supply chain, fire and building consultancies and local fire and rescue services. This was a 54% increase on the previous year. Particularly encouraging was the support from trade associations and industry bodies who hosted their own events, used, blogs, newsletters and social media to reach out to their highly engaged communities endorsing the core messages of Fire Door Safety Week.

The campaign also benefitted from fantastic engagement from the Fire and Rescue Services, who made great use of social media, supported local events, included in school fire safety briefings and and even handed out Fire Door Gap Testers. WMFRS and LFB themselves hosted events (supported by the BWF) – the popularity of these events (one by WMFRS and three by LFB) ensured that expert speakers addressed a packed room.



BWF also worked with LFB in 2017 on a [click it, kick it](#) - social media campaign to try and stop fire doors being wedged and propped open. Donated wedges were [turned into a sculpture](#) that was gifted to LFB at a reception marking 350 years since the Great Fire of London.

Among the high-profile supporters were London Fire Commissioner Dany Cotton, renowned fire safety campaigner Ann Jones AM and Bill Grant, MP for Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock who had 31 years' service in the fire brigade. The Campaign is also supported by and provides support to the Childrens Burns Trust.

The Reach of Fire Door Safety Week

Publicity for the campaign resulted in more than 350 pieces of media coverage, including in the Daily Telegraph and the Mirror newspapers, and 16 broadcast items including on Radio 5 Live, LBC, BBC Radio Leeds and talkRADIO.

The media coverage this year is estimated to have been actively read by 2.7 million people, with another 11.4 million tuning in to broadcast items and 3.6 million touched by the social media campaign (with twitter and LinkedIn being the most active channels). The total reach of 17.7 million is almost double that of last year.

There were also 19,369 visits to the [Fire Door Safety website](#) and 7,850 page views of the [toolkit](#) during the course of 2017. With particularly strong support on social, the 'Thunderclap' campaign alone achieved 159 supporters, reaching 483,467 people across both Twitter and Facebook.

The Fire Door Safety Week Toolkit

The campaign has always focussed on building legacy and each year has produced and refined essential resources available for download from the Fire Door Safety Week website. Examples include the now renowned [Fire Doors Best Practice Guide, a comprehensive overview of fire doors](#), handy [infographics](#), posters (e.g. [know the Responsible Person](#)) fact sheets (e.g. [Fire Doors in HMO's](#)) as well as an array of web pages covering tips and safety checks for both landlords and tenants. Of the items in the toolkit, the most popular was the [5 Step Fire Door Check](#).

The BWF also produced several hard-hitting [videos on fire door safety](#), which provide viewers with behind the scenes insights covering how a fire door is made, how a fire door is tested and a simple 5 step fire door safety check that anyone can do. Extremely successful, to date the video series has achieved more than 96,000 views.

The 5 Step Check

One of the most important messages communicated during Fire Door Safety Week was around the simple steps everyone can take to check the safety of fire doors in their building, which will help ensure standards are maintained. We have called this the '5 Step Fire Door Check' and it is available as a useful video and poster reminder for anyone who lives or works in a building with fire doors:

Check for certification: Is there a label or plug on top (or occasionally on the side) of the door to show it is a certificated fire door? You can use your mobile phone camera or a mirror to check. If there is, that's good news, otherwise report it to whoever is in charge of your building.

5 Step Fire Door Check

Suspect the building you're living in, working in or visiting has a faulty fire door?
Don't walk by. Report it to whoever manages or owns the building.

You could save a life that day.

	Certification	Gaps	Seals	Hinges	Closing properly
WHAT TO CHECK	 Look for a label or plug on top (or occasionally on the side) of the door.	 Check the gaps around the top and sides of the door are consistently less than 4mm when the door's closed. The gap under the door can be slightly larger (up to 8mm), but it does depend on the door. Ideally, you should not see light under the door.	 Look for any intumescent seals around the door or frame. Check they're intact with no sign of damage.	 Check all hinges are firmly fixed (three or more of them), with no missing or broken screws.	 Check the door closes firmly onto the latch without sticking on the floor or the frame.
WHY	Without a certification mark, you cannot be sure this really is a fire door.	Make sure gaps are not so big that smoke and fire could travel through the cracks.	Be sure the seals will expand if they're in contact with heat, and will stop the fire (and in some cases smoke) moving through the cracks.	Be sure the door has been properly maintained, and is the capacity of a fire wall perform properly.	A fire door only works when it's closed. A fire door is completely useless if it's wedged open or can't close fully.
HOW	Use a mirror or the selfie function on your camera phone.	Use a £1 coin to give a feel for scale; this is about 3mm thick.	Take a look at the edges of the door and frame.	Open the door and take a look at the hinges.	Open the door about halfway, let go and see what happens when you allow it to close by itself.
CONCERNS	Report it	Report it	Report it	Report it	Report it

Is there a label or plug on top (or occasionally on the side) of the door to show it is a certificated fire door? You can use your mobile phone camera or a mirror to check. If there is, that's good news, otherwise report it to whoever is in charge of your building.

Check the gaps: Check the gaps around the top and sides of the door are consistently less than 4mm when closed. You can use a £1 coin to give a feel for scale, this is about 3mm thick. The gap under the door can be slightly larger (up to 8mm is not uncommon), but it does depend on the door - as a rule of thumb, if you can see light under the door, the gap is likely to be too big. It's good news if the door fits the frame and it's not damaged. If not, report it. If the gaps are too big smoke and fire could travel through the cracks.

Check the seals: Are there any intumescent seals around the door or frame, and are they intact with no sign of damage? These seals are usually vital to the fire door's

performance, expanding if in contact with heat to ensure fire cannot move through the cracks. Most fire doors also have a smoke seal around the perimeter as well as the intumescent seal. This brush or fin seal should fill the gap when the door is closed. If not, report it - the door may not be properly maintained and in the intensity of a fire may not protect you long enough.

Check the hinges: Are the hinges firmly fixed (three or more of them), with no missing or broken screws? If you see problems, report it - the door needs to be properly maintained.

Check the door closes properly: Is the door easy to operate and does it close fully? Open the door about halfway, let go and allow it to close by itself. Does it close firmly onto the latch without sticking on the floor or the frame? If not, report it. A fire door only works when it's closed. A fire door is completely useless if it's wedged open or can't close fully.

A look ahead to Fire Door Safety Week 2018



Fire Door Safety Week 2018 will take place 24th – 30th September. The underlining theme will be 'Fire Door Five: Shutting the door on fire and smoke'.

The campaign will see the launch of 5 video shorts covering various aspects of Fire Door Safety from specification through to inspection and Fire Door management. There will be a research strand getting to the heart of some of the fundamental fire door safety issues, the launch of a simple online Fire Door Inspection tool (based on the 5 step check), a number of Fire Door Awareness Events hosted across the UK and a host of other activities from the growing band of contributors (as well as all the media and social media amplification that goes alongside these activities).

We have highlighted and circulated a list of 5 things you could do to support Fire Door Safety Week:

1. [Pledge your support](#): to the campaign (if you haven't already)
2. [Share our resources](#): like, retweet and share on social media, send targeted information to your network, write a blog, put up one of our posters (again social links via the website)
3. [Plan your own initiative](#): you could develop an [infographic](#) linked to your product, [make your own pledge](#), [organise your own mass door inspections](#) (you can use the 5 step check) or look at an awareness campaign focussed on your local schools
4. [Run your own awareness event](#): and we'll help you to promote it, find local partners and source speakers (if you let us know!)
5. **Use your local press contacts** to ensure your support is published and the core Fire Door Safety Week messages reach your community (we can help you to draft a release – our [initial launch release is here](#))

These are all just suggestions and the ultimate success of Fire Door Safety Week has been and will continue to be the fantastic support we have enjoyed, the creativity of the community we have reached out to and the unwavering focus on making a positive difference. Help us to successfully close the door on fire and smoke.

Some core social messaging:

- It's #FireDoorSafetyWeek! Show your support and let's shut the door on fire and smoke @FDSafetyWeek
- The #FireDoorFive can save lives. Get involved with #FireDoorSafetyWeek to shut the door on smoke and fire: <https://www.firedoorsafetyweek.co.uk>
- Do a quick #FiveStepCheck of your fire doors to make sure that they're ready to shut the door on smoke and fire: <https://www.firedoorsafetyweek.co.uk/5-step-check/>
- #FireDoorSafetyWeek this is what happens if a fire door isn't third party certified and correctly installed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE8TJTGRxU0>
- When did you last check your building's fire doors? Use the #FiveStepCheck and make sure they will shut the door on fire and smoke <https://www.firedoorsafetyweek.co.uk/5-step-check/> @FDSafetyWeek