

Expert Panel - Update on Fire Doors Investigation 8 August 2018

Advice to Building Owners

Your advice to building owners was revised and reissued (as advised) in light of the failure of some doors with third party certification on 31 July 2018. A copy can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-building-owners-on-assurance-and-replacing-of-flat-entrance-fire-doors> Trading standards is monitoring to ensure customers of the companies that have failed the furnace test have been informed of the failure and asked to inform building owners to review their risk assessments.

Third Party Certification

Two of the manufacturers with failed fire doors reported being part of an Exova led third party scheme – Permadoor and Solar Windows. Exova have confirmed that Permadoor (who informed us they are BM Trada certificated) are certified within the BM TRADA Q-Mark scheme for Steel & Composite Fire Door Manufacture. They have been registered in this scheme since 17/2/2017. BM Trada Q-Mark confirmed that they are undertaking a technical review to understand the implications of the results and have committed to feeding back to us as soon as possible. Exova confirmed that Solar Windows (who reported on their website being certified by the Exova Warrington scheme) do not hold any certification with either Exova Warrington or BM TRADA Certification. We have passed this information to Trading Standards to review.

On 2 August we held a meeting with the fire door third party certification schemes. They acknowledged the issues within the market and support tightening the schemes and increasing transparency to address concerns. They agreed to develop a proposal for minimum standards across all schemes which is expected to cover:

- I. initial testing, assessment and auditing for a company to be accepted on to a scheme - to raise the quality and assurance of companies who gain accreditation;
- II. labelling and websites - to improve transparency in how schemes operate and traceability of accredited products.
- III. frequency of audit visits and audit tests by the third party schemes to the accredited companies – to raise the expectation of companies on the schemes and improve quality assurance
- IV. enforcement – to set clear rules on the process taken if a company fails an audit visit or testing.

The third party certification schemes agreed to provide their initial proposal by this Thursday.

Industry Action

The composite door industry met on 2 August including: the three importers/distributors of composite glass reinforced plastic (GRP) door blanks; a number of manufacturers of fire doors and components. Overall the industry representatives were clear that this was a serious issue and they all bought into making the changes needed. There appeared to be genuine concern that they had been testing wrongly and a real desire to do the right thing.

The members have written following this meeting to confirm that all composite GPR fire doors have been removed from the market and reaffirm their commitment to a joint plan of action (a copy of the letter is attached). They plan to write to the department this week with their full proposal.

Separately, we agreed with the three importers/distributors of composite GRP door blanks that they will not provide any manufacturers with their fire door blanks until consistency of performance can be proven. This has effectively stopped the supply of door blanks into the market. They have agreed to work with manufacturers to develop solutions quickly.

Trading Standards

We have agreed National Trading Standards will provide oversight and co-ordination across local trading standards in investigating fire doors. This will include working with local authority trading standards to achieve compliance and remedial action for non-compliant doors. National Trading Standards will provide regular monitoring and updates to the department on actions by suppliers and local trading standards and advice on local enforcement. If required they are also able to engage directly with fire door manufacturers/importers and/or suppliers of component parts and trade bodies. National Trading Standards have also agreed to monitor the action plan from industry (ref above). National Trading Standards met with us today (8 August) to discuss and agree the detail of this work. A work plan will be produced and agreed over the next week. NTS will continue to update at Expert Panel meetings.

Assessments in lieu of tests

We have achieved the short term aim of restricting the use of assessments in lieu of tests by writing to Building Control bodies advising that replacement doors should have appropriate (furnace) test evidence for their performance as fire doors.

There are a number of potential longer term options around restricting assessments further which we are exploring including, discussions with BSI on the standards which cover fire door testing; an assessment of legal options; and a market analysis of current practice in the use of assessments in lieu of tests which has been commissioned from external consultants.

Update on Testing Programme

We undertook two further tests over the weekend, which were disappointing.

- 3 August, Birtley (provided by Robertson Group), solid door, outside failed at 11 minutes, inside failed at 10 minutes. Manufacturer who was present (we invited them) noted a factory error around the letterbox where they did not have sufficient intumescent material. They have contacted affected customers and are remediating the affected letterboxes.
- 4 August, Vista Panels, solid door, outside failed at 24 minutes (bottom of the door), inside failed at 25 minutes (top left corner). We have informed trading standards as per our normal procedure for failures.

Below are the tests to-date and planned tests over the coming week:

Test date	Manufacturer	Rating	Glazed/Solid	Material	Doorset	Test result	Tested by
12/07/2018	Britdoors	FD30S	Solid	Composite	A (Outside)	Failed at 32 minutes, top right corner	Exova
12/07/2018	Britdoors	FD30S	Solid	Composite	B (Inside)	Failed at 33 minutes, top left corner	Exova
14/07/2018	Permadoor	FD30	Solid	Composite	A (Inside)	Test stopped at 38 minutes, no failure	Exova
14/07/2018	Permadoor	FD30	Solid	Composite	B (Outside)	Failed at 31 minutes, top left corner	Exova
23/07/2018	Permadoor	FD30	Glazed	Composite	A (Inside)	Test stopped at 36 minutes, no failure	Exova
23/07/2018	Permadoor	FD30	Glazed	Composite	B (Outside)	Failed at 19 minutes, glazing	Exova

24/07/2018	Solar Windows	FD30	Glazed	Composite	A (Inside)	Failed at 21 minutes, top left corner	Exova
24/07/2018	Solar Windows	FD30	Glazed	Composite	B (Outside)	Test stopped at 45 minutes, no failure	Exova
28/07/2018	Birtley Group	FD30	Glazed	Composite	A (Inside)	Test stopped at 40 minutes, no failure	Exova
28/07/2018	Birtley Group	FD30	Glazed	Composite	B (Outside)	Failed at 24 minutes, letterbox	Exova
01/08/2018	Sovereign	FD30S	Solid	Composite	A (Inside)	Failed at 21 minutes, bottom left corner	Exova
01/08/2018	Sovereign	FD30S	Solid	Composite	B (Outside)	Failed at 29 minutes, bottom right corner	Exova
03/08/2018	Birtley Group	FD30	Solid	Composite	A (Inside)	Failed at 10 minutes, letterbox	Exova
03/08/2018	Birtley Group	FD30	Solid	Composite	B (Outside)	Failed at 11 minutes, letterbox	Exova
04/08/2018	Vista-Panels	FD30	Solid	Composite	A (Inside)	Failed at 25 minutes, top left corner	Exova
04/08/2018	Vista-Panels	FD30	Solid	Composite	B (Outside)	Failed at 24 minutes, bottom	Exova
09/08/2018	Britdoors	FD30	Glazed	Composite	A (Inside)		Exova
09/08/2018	Britdoors	FD30	Glazed	Composite	B (Outside)		Exova
10/08/2018	Sovereign (Stevenage Council)	FD30	Solid	Composite	A (Inside)		Exova
10/08/2018	Sovereign (Stevenage Council)	FD30	Solid	Composite	B (Outside)		Exova
11/08/2018	Hurst Plastics	FD30S	Glazed	Composite	A (Inside)		Exova
11/08/2018	Hurst Plastics	FD30S	Glazed	Composite	B (Outside)		Exova