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2. Government (<https://www.gov.uk/government/all>)
3. Emergency preparation, response and recovery (<https://www.gov.uk/government/emergency-preparation-reponse-and-recovery>)
4. Fire prevention and rescue (<https://www.gov.uk/government/fire-prevention-and-rescue>)

Press release

Fire safety advice unchanged after issue identified with fire door

An issue has been identified with a fire door installed at Grenfell Tower.

Published 15 March 2018

From:

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government>) and
The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP (<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/sajid-javid>)



An issue has been identified with a fire door installed at Grenfell Tower and, following independent expert advice, the government is undertaking further investigations to establish the full circumstances.

Initial inspections indicate the door is believed to have been designed to resist fire for up to 30 minutes – as required by building regulations guidance. When tested by the Metropolitan Police, however, it failed after approximately 15 minutes.

Independent experts have advised that the risks to public safety remain low, and that evidence from investigations to date does not change this assessment.

To properly understand what has happened, the government has:

- consulted its Independent Expert Panel
- sought technical expertise from the National Fire Chiefs Council, technical experts from industry and the government's Chief Scientific Advisers

- conducted additional testing and visual inspections of fire doors from the same batch of doors installed at Grenfell and a sample of other doors
- commissioned additional testing as part of its investigation

Current investigations are focused on doors produced by a single manufacturer and the company is no longer trading.

While there is no evidence at this stage to suggest this is a widespread problem, the government is clear that this issue needs to be properly investigated.

Further investigations will involve:

- subjecting additional fire doors from the same batch and others to BS476-22 fire resistance tests
- methodical deconstruction and comprehensive visual inspections of a series of doors
- analysis of materials used in the manufacture of this batch of fire doors
- investigation of the manufacturer's supply records

It is important to note that these investigations are separate from the on-going criminal investigation. However, the government is working closely with the Metropolitan Police Service.

Given the technical nature of fire door testing, further investigations will take some time. However, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has committed to providing an update at the end of April.

Secretary of State for Housing, Sajid Javid, said:

Public safety is paramount. Government has consulted a range of independent experts and they have advised that the risks to public safety remain low. I have made it clear that the necessary tests and assessments must be carried out thoroughly, but at pace.

Roy Wilsher, Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council said:

Risks to public safety are very low, and the evidence does not suggest that this has changed. We are confident the government are taking the right steps to provide additional reassurance, through rigorous testing and seeking independent and technical expertise. Our advice has not changed. In the event of a fire, people should continue to follow existing fire procedures for their property.

Sir Ken Knight, Chair of the government's Independent Expert Panel, said:

The government has taken the responsible step of consulting with experts, including the Expert Panel. The risk to public safety remains low and there is currently nothing to suggest this is a widespread issue. We will clearly monitor developments and advise the government of whether further advice is required.

Professor Chris Whitty, interim government Chief Scientific Adviser said:

Relevant departmental Chief Scientific Advisers have been consulted by the independent expert panel on building safety, officials, police and the National Fire Chiefs Council and have been briefed on findings to date.

We are confident that the right approach is being taken with regard to public safety. We also agree with the expert panel's assessment and the National Fire Chiefs Council position that on the evidence to date, there are no grounds to change existing fire procedures.

We have advised that further investigations be carried out and will consider whether further advice is required.

Further information

Investigations to date are focused on front doors from a batch manufactured in 2013 by a company which is no longer trading.

The government has published fire safety guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-guidance>) and this advice has not changed as a result of investigations to date:

- Smoke alarms save lives but only if they're working and in the right place. Ensure you have at least one on every level of your home and test them regularly – monthly is best.
- Keep fire doors shut to help prevent the spread of fire and smoke.
- Understand and follow the fire safety advice for your building. If in doubt, discuss with the landlord or building owner.

Following the Grenfell tragedy, the government commissioned an independent review of building regulations and fire safety. The independent review is being led by Dame Judith Hackitt and a final report will be published in the spring.

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