



Fire Safety Doors - Information Sheet for Leaseholders

This information sheet is for leaseholders of Westminster City Council properties. It aims to help you:

- understand your legal duty as a leaseholder
- identify if your fire safety door is compliant
- provide evidence to the council that your fire safety door is compliant
- apply for alterations permission to upgrade or replace your fire safety door

The Law

There are three main pieces of legislation which apply to fire safety in residential buildings. These are:

- The Building Regulations 2000 (also known as building control regulations) – which requires all homeowners to comply with building control requirements, when undertaking any alterations to their property.
- The Regulatory (Reform Fire) Safety Order 2005 – which requires leaseholders to cooperate and coordinate with Westminster City Council to ensure the risk from fire is reduced as far as possible.
- The Housing Act 2004 – which requires leaseholders to reduce the risk from fire within the home (particularly relevant where a property is sublet)

What are fire safety doors?

Not all flat entrance doors are required to be fire safety doors, such as those that open onto a street or open-air walkway. However, flat entrance doors that form part of a fire compartment in a building are required to be fire safety doors and are one of the most important features of a building's fire precautions and have two key functions:

- to stop a fire inside a flat, spreading to the communal parts and preventing residents from escaping via the corridor or staircase
- and to stop a fire in the communal areas of a block of flats, spreading into a flat, where residents may be sheltering until the fire service arrives.

As most of our buildings operate a "stay put policy" it is especially important that all flat entrance doors are able to prevent a fire spreading throughout the building.

My property still has the original door from when it was built, or I inherited it from the previous owner/the council – do I need to do anything?

Yes – If you have an original door (fitted by the council), the door would have met building regulations at the time it was fitted. However, over time legal requirements and fire safety standards have changed, as such a door installed when the building was constructed or prior to 2000 will now not meet the necessary standard, so you may need to upgrade some elements or replace your door to ensure the flat door meets current standards.



To include, encourage and assist leaseholders get their fire safety doors to standard, we have reduced the alterations application fee for fire safety doors from £400 to £100. We will also offer one of the following options to leaseholders of buildings where we are carrying out tenanted flat or fire safety door replacement work:

- If we are carrying out fire door safety replacement work in addition to work subject to Section 20, we will make the same fire safety doors available to leaseholders, for purchase and install, through our standard opt-in arrangements and service charge payment terms. The installation will be coordinated through our contractor.
- If we are carrying out fire safety door replacement work in a building (not upgrade work) but not in addition to any other leasehold rechargeable works, our contractor will make the same fire safety door available to leaseholders, for purchase and install, through and with payment to them directly.

We're writing to our residents about their fire safety doors and they can check if their building's fire safety doors are due for replacement by searching their building name within our major works portal online at <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/yourhousing/major-works>.

I want or need to change my flat entrance door – what do I need to do and what standard to I need to achieve?

Replacement of flat entrance doors are categorised as controlled work under the Building Regulations 2000.

This means that anyone who wishes to change their flat entrance door (or any other door between their flat and a communal area i.e. a secondary means of escape door), will need to obtain permission from the council and ensure the new door and its installation, meets current standards. You can apply for permission online at [westminster.gov.uk/yourhousing/alterations](https://www.westminster.gov.uk/yourhousing/alterations).

Building Regulations state that all new fire safety doorsets to flats are to be FD30s standard in accordance with BS476: Part 22 1987 or BS EN 1634-1 2000. This means that the door needs to be 30-minute fire and smoke resistant, FD = Fire Door and 30 = relates to the minutes of fire resistance, S denotes that the door is also smoke sealed.

A test certificate for all replacement fire safety doors should be provided by the contractor supplying/ fitting the door confirming that the doorset meets this standard.

How can I check if my fire safety door meets current standards?

If you inherited a fire safety door from a previous owner, then you should check with your solicitor who may be able to confirm if any alterations to the door took place and attain any certificates of compliance from the manufacturer of the door or building control.



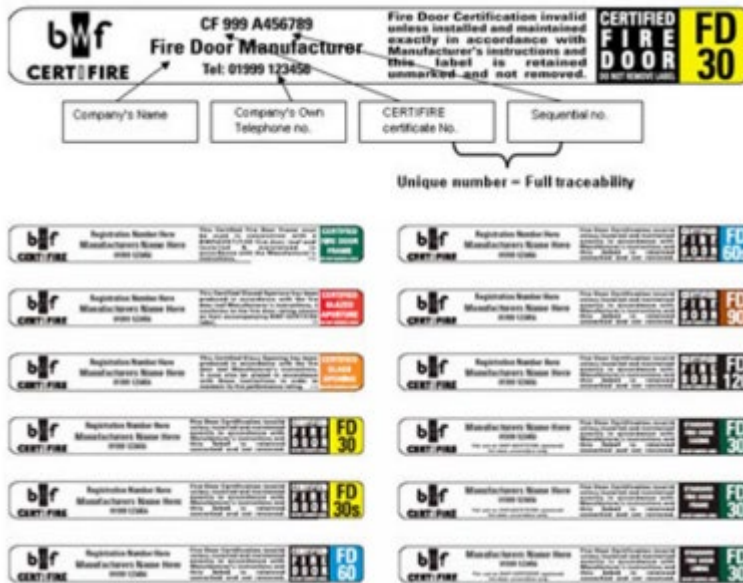
If you have changed your door, either the supplier or builder who installed your door should be able to confirm if the door installed was a fire safety doorset and provide you with a certificate confirming this.

Whilst there are some simple checks you can undertake yourself, to gauge if your flat entrance door meets current standard - the only way to guarantee your door meets current standards is to have it inspected by a certified fire door inspector. London Fire Brigade recommend doors are inspected every 6 months.

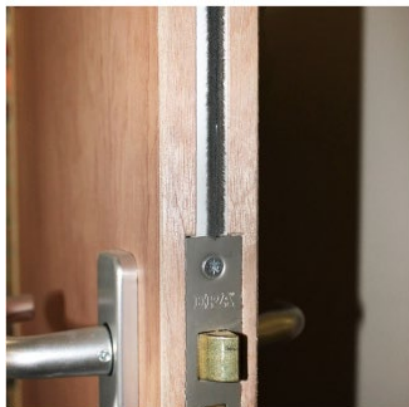
1. Tap / knock your door, does it sound hollow? Look inside your letterbox, does the door look like it's made of solid wood? Fire doors have to be of solid timber construction.
2. Measure the width of the door (the thin edge) – Fire doors must be a minimum of 44mm (4.4cm) in thickness. If your door has panelled sections and the thickness of these timber panels is less than 44 mm in thicknesses (i.e. they are thinner than the surrounding parts of the door) it is unlikely that your door is a fire door.
3. Check if there are three hinges fitted, which bear the CE mark (hinge with CE mark pictured below)



4. Look for a coloured plug in the door itself or any label or markings below, which may indicate the door has been certified by either TRADA's Q-Mark Scheme or BWF's Certifire scheme



5. If your door has a glazed panel(s) within it, the glass should either be Georgian wired or have a special fire-resistant glazing fitted (this will be indicated by an etched mark 'BS476:22'). If the glazing does not have either, it's unlikely that the door is a fire door.
6. Is there a 25mm door stop fitted around the door frame which the door closes too? Or is an intumescent or smoke seal (or a combination) fitted? (Picture of a smoke seal below)



7. Is the door self closing? i.e. when you let it go, it will shut itself. Fire doors are required to be fitted with either an overhead door closer or a jamb closer, as shown below.
8. UPVC doors are not currently accepted as fire doors.

If your door meets all of the above criteria it is likely that it meets the standard and will perform effectively in a fire.

I have been asked to provide evidence to the council that my flat entrance door meets current standards – what do I need to do?

As 'Responsible Person' identified within the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the council reviews flat entrance doors as part of our fire risk assessment



programme and write to individual leaseholders where we identify a door that we deem not to achieve the necessary standard.

Where we identify such doors, we will be asking for leaseholders to supply certification regarding the door to confirm it meets the necessary standard or a copy of the consent for its replacement, where neither are available we will be formally asking you to replace your door within three months.

This can be done by sending documentation via email to housingenquiries@westminster.gov or via post attention to the Leasehold Operations Team at Westminster City Council, 137 Lupus Street, London, SW1V 73HE - within one month of receiving notice to supply.

You should apply for [alterations permission](#) before undertaking this replacement. Please be assured, no action will be taken against leaseholder who wish to take positive action to remedy failures in fire protection.

In circumstances where a leaseholder is unwilling to take remedial action, to ensure the safety of other residents in the building, the council will refer the matter for legal action.

I replaced my door / carried out alterations to my front entrance door and I didn't obtain the council's consent, what can I do?

If you believe that your door meets current standards, you can apply for retrospective alteration approval online at www.westminster.gov.uk/yourhousing/alterations.

If the work carried out does not comply you will be required to organise further alterations to upgrade or replace the door so that it meets current standards.

If you do not obtain the necessary consents, you may find it difficult to sell your property or obtain insurance, as solicitors now require more detailed information regarding fire protection within blocks of flats as part of the conveyancing process.

How can I find a certified contractor to inspected or install a new door for me?

Installing a fire door correctly is as important as ensuring the door itself is to the correct standard, we recommend that leaseholders only utilise the services of a competent third-party accredited fire door installation company.

There are various third-party accredited schemes, which allow you to view their registers and locate a suitably qualified trades person;

- BRE Group –LPCB scheme, LPS 1271 installation of fire and security door sets
(<http://www.redbooklive.com/search/search.jsp?id=163&searchgroupid=53&searchgroupypeid=7>)



- BM Trada Q Mark: OP37 Fire door installation scheme.
(<http://www.bmtrada.co.uk/personnel-certification/bm-trada-q-mark-personnel-schemes/Q-Mark+Fire+Door+Installation>)
- Warrington Fire FIRAS scheme for fire doors
(<http://www.warringtoncertification.com/firas/fire-doors.html>)

Questions

If you have questions, you can find fire safety door information and submit queries, online at westminster.gov.uk/yourhousing/fire-safety-doors.