

Definitions of standard terms used in means of escape requirements

The London Fire Commissioner (the Commissioner) is the fire and rescue authority for London. The Commissioner is responsible for enforcing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (The Order) in London.

Fire Resisting

1. FIRE RESISTING means construction capable of resisting the action of fire for not less than thirty minutes under the prescribed conditions of test appropriate to such construction in accordance with the provisions of the current British Standard 476 and that:

- a) whatsoever is so designated gives effective separation between those parts of the premises on each side of it;
- b) where the word 'enclosed' is used in connection with this term, the room, escape route or other space so described is completely enclosed with walls, ceilings and floors of FIRE RESISTING construction except for that part of the enclosure consisting of a roof, external wall, or the lowest floor of a building;
- c) where the construction consists of or incorporates a door, the door together with its frame complies with Table A below; and the door
 - i) is effectively self closing by means of an automatic self closing device and the device is to conform to BS EN 1154. As an alternative, where the door is to a duct, shaft or cupboard, it may be locked shut and provided with a notice to this effect;
 - ii) is free from any means of holding the door in an open position except, where permitted an electro-magnetic or electro-mechanical door holder device. BS 7273-4 is the applicable document with regard to these devices.
 - iii) is close fitting to both the frame and, where there are two leaves, between the leaves;
 - iv) is hung on hinges no part of which is made either of combustible material or of non-combustible material having a melting point less than 800°C;
 - v) is permanently marked 'Fire door keep shut' in a conspicuous position except whether the door is to a bedroom or to or within a dwelling (including a flat or maisonette);

vi) is imperforate except for the minimum perforations necessary for the fitting of locks and door furniture;

d) where the construction incorporates glazing, in addition to comply with this definition, the glazing is in a frame fixed shut.

2. Where existing ceilings, soffits, walls, partitions, floors and doorsets are not already FIRE RESISTING and are required to be made FIRE RESISTING the following constructions will be accepted as complying with the definition:

a) CEILINGS AND SOFFITS

The ceilings and soffits covered with lath and plaster in good condition, or with plasterboard or FIRE PROTECTIVE BOARDING with sheets closely butted together and securely nailed or screwed to joints/nogging pieces, as appropriate.

b) WALLS AND PARTITIONS

All perforations and gaps sealed with FIRE RESISTING construction. Partitions made flush with timber or FIRE PROTECTIVE BOARDING and covered with plasterboard, or FIRE PROTECTIVE BOARDING butted together, securely nailed or screwed in position.

c) DOORSETS

See Table B below.

Notes:

- i) Protection to partitions, ceilings and doors shall be on the risk side, e.g. on the side remote from an escape route, or, in the case of a screen separating an escape route from the lower part of the building, , on the side exposed to the lower part of the building. Where a lobby or screen is not carried up to the main ceiling and a false ceiling is proved to complete the separation, it may be necessary to protect the upper surface of the ceiling construction.
- ii) Where the risk is on both sides, the construction shall be protected on both sides.

Fire Protective Boarding

3. Attention is drawn to the desirability of effectively sealing the exposed surface of FIRE PROTECTIVE BOARDING by paint or other suitable methods and protecting exposed edges against damage.

Non Combustible Material

4. NON COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL means material which satisfies the test for non combustibility prescribed in the current British Standard 476: Part 4 and is deemed to include plasterboard.

Protected Route

5. PROTECTED ROUTE means a route enclosed with FIRE RESISTING construction and which complies with the following conditions.

- a) service, ventilating and other similar ducts or shafts which pass into or out of the enclosure are FIRE RESISTING within the enclosure;
- b) cupboards are enclosed with FIRE RESISTING construction (except where premises are provided with a single staircase only, in which case cupboards are not accepted and must be taken out of use and sealed with FIRE RESISTING construction on the inside);
- c) no combustible storage is allowed other than in cupboards described in (b) above;
- d) stairs and landings are provided with handrails and are adequately guarded on any open side;
- e) sufficient and suitable artificial lighting is provided for the purpose of means of escape; and
- f) the linings have a surface spread of flame classification not inferior to 'Class 0' when tested in accordance with the provisions of the current British Standard 476: Part 7.

Note:

Lavatories and sanitary accommodation which are neither cloakrooms nor contain gas or portable heating appliances other than water heaters and incinerators may be contained within a PROTECTED ROUTE.

Inherently Non-Flammable Material

6. INHERENTLY NON-FLAMMABLE MATERIAL means material which, although non non-combustible and not submitted to a flame-proofing process nor provided with a flame resistant finish is, in fact, non-flammable throughout its thickness.

The standard for fabrics is 'flameproof' when tested in accordance with the provisions of the current British Standard.

The standard for material other than fabrics is 'Class 1' surface spread of flame when tested in accordance with the provisions of the current British Standard 476: Part 7.

Durably Flame Proofed Fabric

7. DURABLY FLAME PROOFED FABRIC means flame-proofed fabric which after being submitted to a washing treatment remains flame-proof as determined by the method of test prescribed in the current British Standard.

Table A - Minimum requires for Construction and materials of doorsets capable of resisting the action of fire for a period of thirty minutes

1. Doors, including frames, are to be tested and installed in accordance with the current British Standard 476: Part 22 (and BS 476: Section 31.1 where the 'S' specification requires smoke stopping) or BS EN 1634 and are to be certified as being capable of resisting the action of fire for a period of not less than thirty minutes as regards the passage of flame (integrity). There are no requirements as to stability or insulation for doorsets. Doors which met the requirements for resisting the action of fire in the British Standard in force at the time the door was manufactured may be accepted.

2. Doors which open into a corridor or lobby with enclosures capable of resisting the action of fire for a period of not less than thirty minutes may open in two directions provided a maximum clearance of 3mm is achieved at the meeting edges.

Any door capable of being opened in both directions shall be fitted with a vision panel of clear fire resisting glazing.

3. Glazing fixed shut may be incorporated in a door if it is capable of resisting the action of fire in accordance with the current British Standard 476: Part 22. Glazing should be fixed either;

- a) in timber frames with wood or metal beads or with a glazing compound in conjunction with springs or clips in panels not exceeding 0.4m² in area; or
- b) in metal frames with metal beads in panels not exceeding 1.2m² in area, all metal having a melting point not lower than 900°C;

The area of glazing shall also satisfy the provisions of any requirements in the accompanying schedule.

Table B - Upgrading existing doorsets to achieve a fire resisting standard of thirty minutes

- 1. In general, the upgrading of existing doorsets to achieve a standard of fire resistance of thirty minutes is not recommended except in the case of historic buildings. It is preferable that new doorsets are installed.
 - 2. If a doorset is to be upgraded, a test report will be required confirming that the door and frame are capable of resisting the action of fire for not less than thirty minutes when tested in accordance with the current British Standard 476: Part 22 (and BS 476: Section 31.1 when the 'S' specification requires smoke stopping).
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Cupboard doors required to be fire resisting

3. Cupboard doors of standard size shall be replaced with new doors capable of resisting the action of fire for not less than thirty minutes when tested in accordance with the current British Standard 476: Part 22 (and BS 476: Section 31.1 when the 'S' specification requires smoke stopping).

4. For cupboard doors of less than standard size, a suitable fire resisting door shall be cut to size and fitted with an intumescent strip channelled into the top, hinge and closing edges to resist fire when tested in accordance with the current British Standard 476: Part 22.