



Fire Door Maintenance Program

Regular inspection, testing and maintenance of fire doors should be part of a comprehensive facility maintenance program. A good program involves all employees and encourages communication so workers will feel comfortable in reporting fire door damage to their supervisor or to a designated individual.

Management must quickly repair damage or replace a fire door because they are considered the last line of defense in the event of a major fire.

The first step in establishing a written fire door maintenance program is to identify and label all fire doors in the facility, including firewalls or fire barrier walls and their respective ratings. Inventory the fire doors by number, including their location, type (sliding, overhead, swinging, etc.) and rating for use in developing a fire door inspection, testing and maintenance inspection form.

Monthly Inspection

During a visual inspection, the fire door and all associated devices should appear to be in good repair. Fusible links shall be properly located at the top of the opening or at the projecting arm on sliding fire doors and near the releasing mechanism for overhead fire doors and at the ceiling level on each side of the opening.



Fusible links shall not be tied, painted, missing, or corroded. Closing devices that rely on electronic detection should be energized and in good working order. Rails, guides and pulleys shall be clean and well lubricated.

The visual check of the fire doors shall include the following:

1. A visual check of the fire door and all associated hardware for damage – metal shielding, door casings, door guides and rails, counterbalances, bumpers, pulleys and cabling, fusible links, covered baffles of overhead fire doors.
2. A visual check of guides and pulleys to ensure they are clean and lubricated.
3. A visual check for obstructions – storage or wedges that would hinder or prevent a fire door from properly operating or fully closing.
4. A visual check for combustible storage or construction within the vicinity of the fire wall opening – there should be no combustible storage near the door opening as the fire could spread through the opening before the door closes automatically.

All damage should be noted on the appropriate form and any significant problems addressed immediately.

Maintenance

Maintenance of fire doors shall include manual closing of the fire door and cleaning and lubricating of rails, guides and pulleys.

Check the open spaces around the fire doors during closing to ensure the spacing at the bottom of the fire door does not exceed those listed in NFPA 80 "Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives" – Section 4.8.4. This standard is 3/4 inches or less for fire doors with bottom sills and 3/8 inches or less from the bottom of doors without bottom sills.



The frequency of maintenance depends on the environment in which the doors exist. Maintenance rarely needs to be done on more than a monthly basis.

Annual "Drop" or Performance Test

Perform a full operational "drop" or performance test at least once a year. This should be performed by individuals with knowledge and understanding of the operating components of the type of door being subject to testing. Operational testing of the fire door should simulate actual conditions. Testing may include disconnecting the fusible link, or activating an automatic detection device, such as a smoke detector, waterflow alarm or manual pull station to release any automatic locking device or magnet releases.

During testing the governing assembly of overhead fire doors and spring tension should be checked and adjusted as needed prior to the re-setting of the overhead fire door.

Do not use heating devices or cutting of fusible lines to release the fire door. The purpose of the "drop" or performance test is to check the proper operation of the fire door, to make sure that it will operate automatically in the event of a fire: freely sliding, rolling or swinging shut and properly protecting the firewall or fire barrier wall opening.

Fusible links need not be tested, but should be replaced if they are painted, corroded or otherwise damaged.

After the successful performance test has been completed, you should lubricate the moving parts and follow the manufacturer's instructions for resetting the door. Ideally, an authorized agent of the manufacturer should reset the door.

If a manufacturer's representative does not reset the fire door, the door should be reset and then retested to verify proper resetting procedures have been used. Once successful operation has been verified the door can be reset and made operational.

This Alliant Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.