



CITYWEST HOMES

May 2017

## Fire safety and your legal duty as a leaseholder

### 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 lessee's to cooperate and coordinate with CityWest Homes to ensure the risk from fire is reduced as far as possible
- **The Housing Act 2004** – Which requires lessee's to reduce the risk from fire within the home (particularly relevant where a property is sublet).

### Flat entrance doors

Flat entrance doors are required to be fire 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 many of CityWest Homes' blocks of flats operate a 'defend in place' commonly known as a 'stay put' fire policy, it is especially important that all flat entrance doors are able to prevent a fire spreading throughout the building.

\*Flat entrance doors are not required to be fire rated for flats accessed from an open balcony / walkway where there are two directions of travel i.e. you can exit your property and can turn either left or right and reach a staircase / exit door that will take you outside of the building.

### I want to change my flat entrance door

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 building control department at Westminster City Council in addition to seeking CityWest Homes' consent and ensuring the new door, meets current standards.

## **I inherited my door when I purchased the property (either from the council or from a previous leaseholder), do I need to do anything?**

Yes – 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.

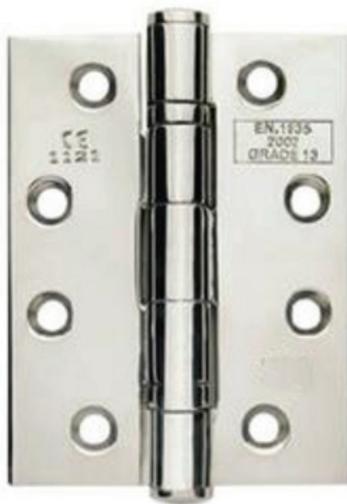
### **How can I check if my door meets the current standards?**

If you inherited your door from a previous owner, check with your solicitor who should have confirmed if any alterations had been undertaken to the property and attained copies of any building control consents attained for alterations undertaken. This should include information regarding any replacement of the flat door.

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 door set and provide you with a certificate confirming this.

If you can't find any information about your door, there are some simple checks you can undertake to confirm if it is a fire door set:

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 44mm in thickness (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 (as shown below)



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

**BM TRADA CERTIFICATION** **UKAS** **Q-MARK**

**Timber Fire Door Certification Scheme**

Outer colour - Period of fire resistance  
 Inner Tree colour - Status  
 Unique member's certification number

**Outer colour - Period of fire resistance (mins)**

30	60	90	120

**Inner Tree colour - when fixed to door**

Approved door. (FD30 & FD60 only) Intumescent not yet fitted.	Approved factory fitted glazing.
Approved door. Intumescent in door factory fitted.	Certified factory hung doorset (silver)
	Certified installed doorset (gold)

**Inner Tree colour - when fixed to frame**

Approved frame to match door. All intumescent to door and frame fitted.
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For scheme and members' details visit [www.bmtrada.com](http://www.bmtrada.com) or telephone 01494 569700

**bwf CERTIFIRE** **CF 999 A456789** **Fire Door Manufacturer** **Tel: 01999 123456**

Fire Door Certification invalid unless installed and maintained exactly in accordance with Manufacturer's instructions and this label is retained unmarked and not removed.

**CERTIFIED FIRE DOOR FD 30**

Company's Name	Company's Own Telephone No	CERTIFIRE Certificate No	Sequential No
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Unique number - full traceability

- 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
- Is there a 25mm door stop fitted around the door frame which the door closes to? 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 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.

### **Can I upgrade my current door rather than replace it to meet the standard?**

This will depend on the construction of the door, if a door isn't of solid construction, of the correct thickness or fitted with the correct glazing, it won't be possible to upgrade it.

In some cases the door itself may be adequate and only minor improvements such as changing ironmongery or fitting a self-closing device may be required. Please contact CityWest Homes' health and safety team (details can be found at the end) if you are unsure and would like further assistance and advice or would like to have your door assessed.

Where upgrading of an existing door is undertaken, a valid fire test report or assessment report by a suitably qualified person must be provided by the lessee on completion of works. Where this is not provided, building control and CityWest Homes will not be able to accept the door and may require that it is replaced with a new door set.

### **I want to replace my front door what standard do I need to achieve?**

All new fire door sets to flats are to be to FD30s standard in accordance with BS476: Part 22 1987 or BS EN 1634-1 2000. We also recommend new flat doors meet 'security by design' standards.

A test certificate for all replacement doors should be provided to the homeowner by the contractor supplying / fitting the door confirming that the door set meets this standard.

Alternatively, fire door sets should be marked in accordance with TRADA's Q-Mark Scheme or BWF's Certifire Scheme.

CityWest Homes provides a detailed guidance note 'how to specify a fire door set' which lessee's can download from our website or request a copy via our lessee services team, to assist in ensuring you purchase the correct door and ironmongery.

## **How can I find a competent builder to 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 homeowners 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 ([www.redbooklive.com/search/search.jsp?id=163&searchgroupid=53&searchgroupTypeID=7](http://www.redbooklive.com/search/search.jsp?id=163&searchgroupid=53&searchgroupTypeID=7))
- BM Trada Q Mark: OP37 Fire door installation scheme ([www.bmtrada.co.uk/personnel-certification/bm-trada-q-mark-personnel-schemes/Q-Mark+Fire+Door+Installation](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 ([www.warringtoncertification.com/firas/fire-doors.html](http://www.warringtoncertification.com/firas/fire-doors.html)).

## **Replacement or removal of internal flat doors and internal layout alterations**

Like flat entrance doors, certain doors inside your flat i.e. the kitchen door, or if you live in a maisonette all the doors between a room and your staircase, are also fire doors. Their purpose is to prevent a fire from spreading from the room it started within, to another room and to stop the fire and smoke preventing you from leaving your flat.

As such if you want to remove or replace any internal doors or alter the layout of your flat in any way, you must attain building control and CityWest Homes' consent, so we can ensure that the work you want to carry out won't prevent you being able to escape if a fire starts in your home.

If the work you plan to do includes any which will involve knocking or drilling a hole in any wall, floor or ceiling i.e. to install a flue or run any cabling, we also need to ensure that the integrity of the wall, floor or ceiling is reinstated. So in the event of a fire in your flat, your neighbours or the communal area, that fire and smoke aren't able to pass through the hole into another part of the building.

## **Replacement of windows or the installation of security grilles or shutters**

In flats located at basement, ground and first floor level, or in flats accessed from communal walkways / balconies the windows from living areas and bedrooms are designed to be escape windows, to enable residents to use the windows to escape through, if there is a fire in their home.

As such if you would like to replace your windows, it will be necessary for the windows to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations in relation to their design and the size of the opening required. CityWest Homes cannot, where a window is an escape window, provide consent for security grilles or shutters to be installed, as the window must be maintained unobstructed to enable escape.

## **Installation of smoke detection**

CityWest Homes works closely with London Fire Brigade and supports the Fire Kills campaign. We strongly recommend that all homeowners install smoke detection within their homes.

If you don't already have smoke detection, please contact London Fire Brigade and arrange a Home Safety Visit, during which the fire crew will fit you smoke detection free of charge. You can request a Home safety visit at [www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp) or by picking a free postcard at one of our estate offices.

### **I have replaced my door / carried out alterations to my flat and I didn't attain building control approval or CityWest Homes consent, what can I do?**

If you believe that your door meets the necessary standard, you can apply for retrospective consent for the alteration from both building control and CityWest Homes.

Similarly if you have undertaken alterations to your flat without attaining consent, you can also apply for retrospective consent for the alteration. However you may be required to reinstate / alter the layout or features of the flat, if the work carried out does not comply with Building Regulation requirements.

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

CityWest Homes are carrying out a review of fire doors across the borough as part of our fire risk assessment programme and will be writing to individual leaseholders where we identify a door that we deem not to achieve the necessary standard.

If you are aware that your door does not meet the required standard we strongly advise that you take the necessary steps to replace it, to ensure your families safety and the safety of other residents of the building.

Where we identify such doors we will be asking for the leaseholder to supply certification regarding the door to confirm it meets the necessary standard or a copy of the building control consent for its replacement. Where neither is available we will be formally asking you to replace your door.

You should apply for building control and CityWest Homes consent to undertake this replacement. Please be assured, no action will be taken against leaseholders who wish to take positive action to remedy failures in fire protection measures.

In circumstances where a leaseholder is unwilling to take remedial action, to ensure the safety of other residents of the block, CityWest Homes will refer the matter to the relevant enforcement authority for them to consider formal legal action.

### **For further information contact**

Health and safety team  
CityWest Homes  
21 Grosvenor Place  
London  
SW1X 7EA  
[healthandsafety@cwh.org.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@cwh.org.uk)