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PFPF concerned by DCLG fire door ruling



A recent determination from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the omission of intumescent strips and smoke seals on bedroom fire doors in a hotel gives cause for concern, says the Passive Fire Protection Federation.

The determination ruled that a 215-bedroom hotel did not need to fit intumescent strips and smoke seals to all of its bedroom fire doors in order to satisfy its legal obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (the Order). However, it required that any absence of intumescent strips and seals must be “recorded and justified” (see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firedoors?view=Standard>).

“The PFPF recognises that, whilst in some cases a justification can be prepared which leads to the omission of intumescent strips, this should be the exception rather than the rule,” declared Niall Rowan, technical officer for the Association for Specialist Fire Protection, a PFPF member.

“The PFPF has a very strong and legitimate concern that this determination will be used to justify the omission of intumescent and smoke seals on all bedroom doors in all hotels, in contravention of Approved Document B and other guidance issued by DCLG.”

“In reality, the desire to omit seals will be driven by financial considerations and not by any informed or objective evaluation of fire risk,” he added.

Mr Rowan explained that whilst the Order requires that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is undertaken for the purposes of means of escape (life safety); it is not a full check of compliance with AD-B or any other document.

“The PFP industry understands that there is no requirement under the Order to impose current guidance onto older buildings or to retrospectively upgrade buildings to the latest standards. But, if a fire risk assessor is in any doubt about the adequacy of fire protection, he or she should recommend that fire doors are upgraded or replaced to satisfy the guidance currently issued by DCLG. This includes the fitting of intumescent and smoke seals,” he said.

For further information and guidance on fire safety, visit www.pfpf.org.

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Notes to Editors

1. The PFPF (www.pfpf.org) is the body for the built-in fire protection industry, and is dedicated to growing awareness of fire protection and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Membership includes the Chief Fire Officers Association, the DCLG, Local Authority Building Control and the Fire Test Study Group (UK) Ltd.
2. "Determination on the suitability and sufficiency of a fire risk assessment in a hotel in respect of the adequacy of the existing bedroom fire doors" was published by DCLG on 9 May. The ruling, by Sir Ken Knight, the Government Chief Fire and Safety Officer, describes and applies to a single situation. It can be downloaded from:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firedoors?view=Standard>

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