



David Emerson
Series Producer, Property Snakes & Ladders
Talkback Thames
77 Woodside Road
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CC: Julian Bellamy, Controller, Channel 4

12th June 2009

Dear Mr Emerson

Property Snakes and Ladders Channel 4 - 9 June 2009

We wanted to let you know, as a matter of urgency, that we are very concerned about the advice given by Sarah Beeny (also mentioned on the website) regarding the upgrading of an existing door in the featured property to make it fire resistant simply by applying intumescent paint.

To an untrained and inexperienced audience the simplistic advice given by the programme could have disastrous results, unless the process is undertaken by a qualified person who understands how fire doors work and how they should be installed. The fact of the matter is that upgrading a standard door to meet the necessary fire test standard requires a very clear understanding of a number of crucial factors:

- The type of wood of which the door is made – softwood burns much quicker than hardwoods because of their density. Knowing the density of the door is crucial
- the thickness of the door
- The structure of the door i.e. is it solid or made with a panelling structure?
- whether the door has a glass panel which should also be fire resistant and installed correctly
- the required period of fire resistance – usually measured in 30 or 60 minute periods
- the number of coats of intumescent paint required and its accurate application at the correct coating thickness for each coat (undercoat and topcoats)
- An approved means of measuring that applied thickness to ensure that the recommended ratios are met

As the above implies, the fire resisting performance data claimed by a manufacturer of a fire door or of an intumescent coating product will always relate **only** to the specific door configuration involved in the test. **Neither the door nor any applied intumescent coating is tested in isolation but as a complete door installation.** It is unlikely that, in a home environment, the specific processes required could be replicated.

It is also necessary to consider other factors when determining a fire rating for a specific situation. For example, the installer must also take into account the fire resistance of the ironmongery fitted to the door, the wood used in the frame, the architrave around the frame, the need for intumescent seals around the door and the overall door-set configuration.

Passive Fire Protection Federation

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www.pfpf.org.uk

The use of fire doors in houses of multiple occupation and dwelling homes of three or more storeys is about protecting lives and property, by separating living and sleeping areas from high risk areas. Failure to comply with the requirements is a breach of the Building Regulations, compromises the safety of occupants and visitors and could even result in criminal prosecution under Health & Safety legislation.

We fully appreciate that the programme is designed to help homeowners upgrade their properties. Sarah Beeny has become synonymous with good advice about property values and property improvements. This is why we are seriously concerned that the advice that has been given about fire doors is misleading. Fire doors really are an incredibly effective passive fire protection measure if designed and fitted correctly. But they simply will not do their job if the key criteria, outlined above, are not met. The consequences could be very serious.

We would be more than happy to assist your researchers in addressing our concerns and providing, (through your programme and website) the accurate information that homeowners need about fire doors. We look forward to hearing from you.

If you would like to discuss the above, please contact Richard Lambert of the British Woodworking Federation on 0870 458 6941 or richard.lambert@bwf.org.uk.

Yours sincerely



David Sugden
Chairman, **Passive Fire Protection Federation**

The PFPF (www.pfpf.org) is the overriding body for the built-in fire protection industry, and is dedicated to growing awareness on 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 – see below for full details.



Richard Lambert
Chief Executive, **British Woodworking Federation**

The BWF (www.bwf.org.uk) has developed the BWF-CERTIFIRE Fire Door and Doorset Scheme, in partnership with Warrington Certification, the certification arm of Bodycote Warringtonfire. The scheme is designed to ensure that all fire door assemblies are properly installed and maintained.



Wilf Butcher
Chief Executive Officer, **Association for Specialist Fire Protection**

The ASFP (www.asfp.org.uk) represents over 50 of the UK's major manufacturers and contractors, as well as regulatory and certification bodies, and overseas associates involved in structural steel fire protection and penetration sealing/fire stopping.

Members	
<p> <u>ARCHITECTURAL & SPECIALIST DOOR MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION</u> <u>ASSOCIATION FOR SPECIALIST FIRE PROTECTION</u> <u>BRE, incorporating LPCB</u> <u>BRITISH WOODWORKING FEDERATION</u> <u>DOOR AND HARDWARE FEDERATION</u> <u>FEDERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL TRADE ASSOCIATIONS LTD</u> <u>FM APPROVALS LIMITED</u> <u>GUILD OF ARCHITECTURAL IRONMONGERS</u> <u>GLASS & GLAZING FEDERATION</u> <u>GYPSUM PRODUCTS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION</u> <u>IFC CERTIFICATION LTD</u> <u>INTUMESCENT FIRE SEALS ASSOCIATION</u> <u>BMTRADA CERTIFICATION LIMITED</u> <u>BODYCOTE WARRINGTONFIRE</u> </p>	<p> <u>ASSOCIATION OF BUILDING ENGINEERS</u> <u>CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION</u> <u>CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION</u> <u>DCLG (BUILDINGS DIVISION)</u> <u>DCLG (HMFSI)</u> <u>FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION</u> <u>FIRE TEST STUDY GROUP (UK) LTD</u> <u>LOCAL AUTHORITY BUILDING CONTROL</u> <u>ROYAL INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED SURVEYORS</u> </p>