

Fire Policy Practice Guidance Note		
Passive Fire Precautions On Trust Premises V04		
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KEY POINTS

- **Passive fire precaution measures are fittings that are permanent fixtures to buildings to provide a degree of safety in the event of fire.**
- **The current fire safety legislation, The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and current building regulations focus on fire prevention in the workplace and one issue often neglected is structural or passive fire protection.**
- **This guidance note describes the requirements of the Trust with regard to passive fire measures used within Trust premises and gives guidance on correct use to ensure adequate protection in the event of fire.**
- **This guidance note is for the attention of all staff.**

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Fire Practice Guidance Notes form part of the CNTW Group's approach to managing health and safety and it is expected that staff will follow the guidance contained within them unless there is a compelling reason to deviate from it. Such reasons should be documented whenever the circumstance occurs and notified to the Head of Estates so that modifications to future editions can be made if necessary.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The fire-resistant qualities of building construction are vitally important in the continuing pursuit of safety from fire within Cumbria Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust Group (CNTW Group) premises.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Practice Guidance Note (PGN) is to provide an overview of the standards employed in Trust buildings to enable the Trust to be assured that the fire resistance of buildings is clearly understood by Trust employees and the information can be utilised by those providing or maintaining services.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This PGN together with any associated procedures and guidance notes, shall be observed by all employees of the Trust and is applicable to responsible persons and their nominated deputies

3 Statement

- 3.1 The CNTW Group are committed to effective management and control of fire safety in order to reduce the risks to patients, staff, visitors and members of the public.
- 3.2 The Fire Safety Advisors will actively assist all responsible persons in ensuring the fire risk assessment is carried out satisfactory manner.

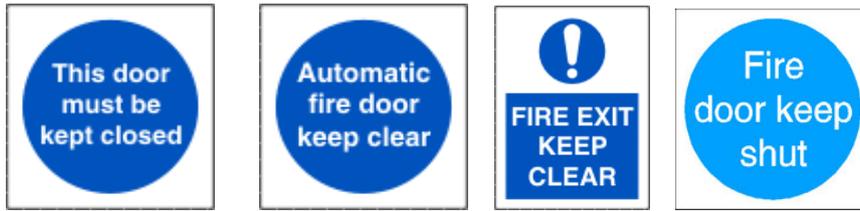
4 Types of Passive protection

- 4.1 Passive fire protection is built into the fabric of the building and helps to prevent rapid smoke fire spread which could trap occupants of the building. Passive fire protection includes structural measures that are often unseen or taken for granted and the common ones used are described in more detail below.

4.2 Fire Doors

- 4.2.1 Fire doors are found on premises that admit members of the public or are used as a place of work. Health care premises include the use of 30-minute, 60-minute and occasionally higher-grade fire-resistant doors. A fire door is identified in various ways. The most obvious are a small disc attached on the upper part of the door with the initials FR (fire resistant) and the numbers 30 or 60 depending on the fire rating of the door. The letter S may appear after the numbers, this means the doors are fitted with smoke seals.
- 4.2.2 Fire doors will also have mandatory signage carrying information and Instructions – see below. These signs are there for a reason and need to be adhered to otherwise the fire protection that these doors provide will be seriously breached. Fire doors also incorporate smoke seals and intumescent strips around the edge of the door to prevent the passage of smoke and heat. Sub-dividing corridor doors should have these seal fitted to maintain the integrity of the corridor for escape purposes. Smoke seals, often due to everyday wear and tear, become dislodged or worn through use. Any defect should be reported to Estates immediately.

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Examples of fire door mandatory signage

4.3 Fire resistant glass

4.3.1 Most fire rated glazing in Trust premises is recognised by being Georgian wired and any fire doors that require a vision panel or window should be fitted with fire resistant glass. The glazing should be checked regularly for signs of damage and any defects reported immediately. Glazed vision panels are required under the Equality Act to allow for wheelchair users to be able to see the other side of a door and must be set at an appropriate height within the door.

4.4 Fire resistant paint and varnish

4.4.1 Fire protective or intumescent paints and varnishes are just like any other wall or wood covering – they must be maintained on a fairly regular basis to afford the protection to the item covered. There are various types and styles of decorative intumescent coverings and most will give about 30 minutes fire protection provided they are maintained well. Most non-fire rated doors can be given protection by applying intumescent coverings.

4.5 Fire resistant walls and ceiling structure

4.5.1 New buildings and most existing buildings will be constructed using fire resisting materials. Normal brickwork provides about 30 minutes fire protection as does a single sheet of 12.5 mm plasterboard. This, combined with the provision of fire doors, will essentially create compartments in a building which are fire protected and will offer a degree of safety to persons particularly in buildings with more than one floor, that is why it is essential that fire doors are used correctly.

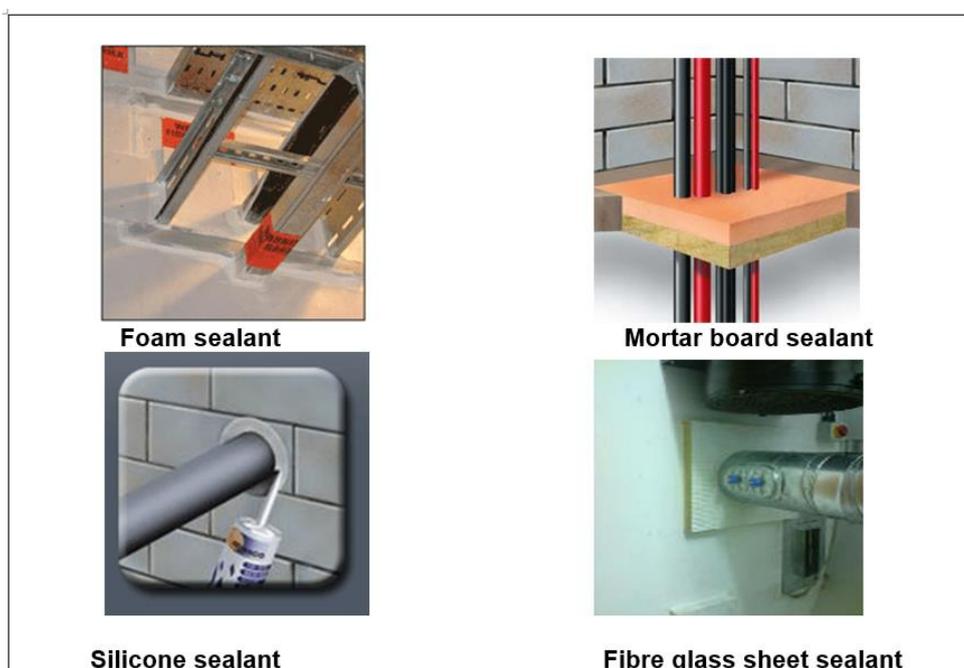
4.5.2 Any fire door wedged open will breach the integrity of the safe area created by the fire-resistant internal walls and may allow fire spread. In multi-storey premises staircases must afford a degree of fire protection, normally 60 minutes, to allow for safe evacuation from fire.

4.5.3 The problem faced by all building types is that to be useable, compartments must be breached on a regular basis so people can use doors and move around freely. With this in mind, most fire rated doors will have self-closing or automatic door-release devices fitted to allow movement of people and at the same time, allow the door to do the job it is intended to do by closing automatically on actuation of the fire alarm or once it has been pushed open for access. If a fire door is wedged open it will not afford any protection and may make the situation worse. It may also breach the terms and conditions of an insurance policy which could affect insurance cover.

4.5.4 External cladding of walls, incorporating both cladding and insulation, will be done using only materials with a proven track record of providing the highest degree of fire safety.

4.6 Fire Stopping

4.6.1 Fire stopping is a term used to describe the sealing holes or cavities left by the passage of pipe work and other facilities through walls and ceilings from one area to another. These holes will allow the passage of smoke and heat from one area to another if they are not blocked off. There are various methods of sealing unwanted holes and cavities but the most common are the use of foam or silicone sealant and solid blocking material such as mortar.



5.0 Assessment

- 5.1 When a fire risk assessment is being carried out or an existing fire risk assessment is being reviewed any obvious defects regarding fire resistant materials should be reported. This may include damage to walls, glass panels either by accidental means or deliberate action, damage to fire doors, smoke seals and false ceilings.
- 5.2 Loft areas or attics are often used for storage of combustible materials and precautions must be put in place if this is the case. Smoke detection should be extended to cover these areas and fire stopping should be in place. Smoke can travel long distances from its source of origin, even from a small fire, often giving a false sense of location of fire and it can quickly make large areas inaccessible for escape purposes. Fire prevention measures often give staff and other persons in a building a head start as far as evacuation is concerned.

6 Summary

- 6.1 Whilst the internal construction of a building will have very little to do with the persons that work in or visit the building, being aware of the fire precautions in place and safe areas within a building can be very useful in the event of a fire or alarm actuation. If you have any concerns about any area of the premises that you work in or visit, contact the Estates department or Fire Safety Advisor.