

INFORMATION

Ref: DH/2014/003

Issued: 21/10/2014

Notice

Reminder for the testing of fire & smoke dampers and ensuring the integrity of fire stopping

Information

There have been recent reports in the national media regarding:

- the lack of suitable access to fire and smoke dampers, and their actuating mechanisms, to enable inspection, maintenance and testing to be completed in a safe and competent manner.
- inadequate inspection, recording and documentation of fire stopping.

It has been highlighted that in certain circumstances, due to incorrect design and installation, maintenance personnel cannot gain safe access to facilitate the necessary statutory inspection of the fire and smoke dampers and their actuating mechanisms. In addition there has been a failure to record the full details of where fire stopping has been installed, hence causing difficulties in ensuring its integrity is maintained.

This results in the organisation responsible for the building potentially being in contravention of Article 17 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and thereby putting patients, visitors and staff at risk in the event of a fire.

Action required

1. All healthcare organisations should review the guidance on fire and smoke dampers and fire stopping contained within*:
 - Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - Building Regulations – Approved Document B
 - Health Technical Memorandum 05 series: Firecode – Fire safety in the NHS
 - Health Technical Memorandum 03-01: specialised ventilation for healthcare premises (Parts A and B)
 - HBN 04-01: Isolation facilities for infectious patients in acute settings

*Note: this list is not exhaustive.

Fire and Smoke Dampers

2. All healthcare organisations should review their existing risk assessments and inspection/maintenance regimes relating to the inspection, maintenance and testing of fire and smoke dampers and their associated actuating mechanisms and control systems.

3. All healthcare organisations should ensure that they have a full inventory of all installed fire and smoke dampers within their premises.
4. All installed fire and smoke dampers, and their associated actuating mechanisms and control systems, should be included in a formal maintenance programme to ensure that they are inspected and tested in order to confirm they:
 - meet the guidance cited above and are fit for the purpose they are intended.
 - are in good working order and have not been damaged, disconnected or wedged open.
5. Where a lack of safe access to a fire or smoke damper, and its associated actuating mechanism, is identified this should be brought to the immediate attention of the Director of Estates & Facilities and the Trust Fire Safety Manager / Fire Advisor.
6. Where problems are identified, a programme to repair or replace damaged fire and smoke dampers, and associated actuator mechanisms, should be put in place.
7. Once any repair or replacement programme has been completed, the fire risk assessment for the premises should be updated, and key findings brought to the attention of all staff that might be affected.

Fire stopping

8. All healthcare organisations should review their existing risk assessments and inspection regimes relating to the inspection of fire stopping.
9. All healthcare organisations should ensure that they have a full inventory of fire stopping within their premises ([see HTM 05-01 Appendix E – Developing fire safety protocols](#) for advice on the information that should be collated).
10. If not already in place, systems should be implemented to ensure the integrity of fire stopping can be confirmed within the organisation's premises. This should incorporate permit-to-work systems that ensure fire stopping is re-instated during, and following, works (e.g. construction, installation or maintenance) that may impinge on the integrity of the installed fire stopping.

Suggested Onward Distribution

Those responsible at Board Level for Fire Safety/Protection
Directors of Estates & Facilities
Risk Managers
Health & Safety Managers
Fire Safety Officers/advisers

References

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents/made>

Building Regulations – Approved Document B

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partb/>

Firecode:

Health Technical Memoranda 05-01 Managing Fire Healthcare safety

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-healthcare-fire-safety>

Health Technical Memoranda 05-02

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-in-support-of-functional-provisions-for-healthcare-premises>

Health Technical Memoranda 05-03 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suite-of-guidance-on-fire-safety-throughout-healthcare-premises-parts-a-to-m>

Health Technical Memorandum 03-01: specialised ventilation for healthcare premises (Parts A and B) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-specialised-ventilation-for-healthcare-premises-parts-a-and-b>

HBN 04-01: Isolation facilities for infectious patients in acute settings

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-in-patient-facilities>

Additional information for England

The above sections of this Alert were compiled by Department of Health for circulation in England only.

Action required by this alert should be **underway by: 28/10/2014**

Action required by this alert should be **completed by: 30/04/2015**

Enquiries should quote reference number DH/2014/003 and be addressed to:

Mb-defects&failures@dh.gsi.gov.uk

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<https://www.cas.dh.gov.uk>

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