

Fire Rated Doors and Wedges

Risk Management/Environmental Health and Occupational Safety (RM/EHOS) would like to remind the campus community of the regulations regarding fire rated doors.

What is a Fire Rated Door?

A fire-rated door protects openings through fire-rated walls. Any time a doorway to a compartment is propped open by use of an unapproved device, such as a wood or plastic wedge, or the latching hardware is bypassed by taping the latch, the fire-rated compartment is temporarily violated. To minimize the break in protection, fire doors, including the closer and latching hardware, must not be user modified. Fire-rated doors, when properly used, are designed to provide resistance to the spread of fire, smoke, and toxic gases.



A fire door is a passive fire protection feature used within buildings to prevent the spread of fire. Fire-rated doors are certified by testing laboratories and typically have the laboratory's certification label on the inside edge or top of the door. The photo shows an example of a testing laboratory's label on the inside edge of a fire door. Please note that some of our older doors may not have the label but should be treated as a fire door.



Fire doors are designed to be closed at all times. The only exception to this is if they are held open by magnetic hold open devices that will release the door upon activation of the fire alarm system. If you are unsure if a door in your area is a rated fire door, contact RM/EHOS. Generally speaking, every stairwell door is fire rated since it is part of the "protected path of egress" for building occupants. **Do not wedge or allow any of these doors to be held open unattended for convenience sake.** If you have in your area, a door with broken closures or won't latch, contact Physical Plant to have it repaired.

Requirements

Fire-rated doors are often held open for the convenience of the employees and visitors, creating a significant fire hazard for all building occupants because of the break created in the fire wall. The California Building Code Section 715.4.7 states: "Fire rated doors must be automatic or self-closing and latching." In common terms, this means that the fire-rated doors cannot be held open by any unapproved means, such as a wedge or string tied to the wall. Fire-rated exit doors can be held open if they are part of the building alarm system, so that they automatically release when the building fire alarm system is activated. A fire-rated door held open during fire provides no protection to the occupants. A fire door that has been modified by the user can no longer confine smoke and fire to the area of origin, and may not provide occupants with valuable time to evacuate the building.

If you have any questions regarding this safety tip or safety concerns, please contact your supervisor or Risk Management/EHOS at 310-243-2895 or 310-243-3012.