

Fact Sheet Fire Rated Doors and Wedges

What is a Fire Rated Door?

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. According to the example below, this door provides 3 hours of protection from smoke and fire.



A fire-rated door protects openings through fire-rated walls. Any time these doorways are propped open by with a wood or plastic wedge, or the latching hardware is bypassed by taping the latch, the fire-rated door cannot serve its purpose. 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.

How Does it Work?

Fire doors are designed to be closed at all times. The California Building Code Section 715.4.7 states: "Fire rated doors must be automatic or self- closing and latching." Fire-rated exit doors can be held open by a magnetic hold device that is connected to the building's fire alarm system. It will release the door upon activation so that the door closes the area off to the spread of fire. Generally speaking, every stairwell door is fire rated since it is part of the protected path of egress for building occupants. If you notice a fire rated door with broken closures or won't latch, contact Work Control to have it repaired.

Basic Requirements

When fire alarms go off, these doors help to prevent a fire from moving quickly. This allows the occupants to evacuate safely and allows firefighters to extinguish fires faster. Unfortunately, these doors are often held open for the convenience of the employees and students, creating a significant fire hazard. A fire-rated door held open during fire provides no protection to the occupants. Fire doors are commonly propped open by a wedge, furniture, or a string attached to a wall.



Is my Door Fire Rated?

Not all building doors are required to be fire-rated. Personal office doors are often not rated for fires. These are the *only* exceptions to using wedges to keep the door open. If you are unsure if a door in your area is a rated fire door, check the frame of the door for the fire label.

If you need additional help, contact Environmental Health and Safety at ehs@csudh.edu