



Happy Valentine's Day

Fire Rated Doors for Dummies

Most people are aware that you need a label for your door and a label for your frame to meet the requirements of a fire partition. However, those are not the only criteria. Many other items come into play that may or may not be obvious to the layman or even the well seasoned contractor. Although fire barriers encompass other areas of construction (items such as stud gages and gypsum wall board thickness), this article will focus on the fire door assembly itself.

1. Labels: Do both the door and frame have the proper labels? Fire labels indicate the maximum ratings for your assembly. What this means is if your installation calls for a 1 hour separation and you're supplied with a 3 hour rated door and frame, you are good to go. If, however, you try to put a 20 minute rated assembly in a 3 hour wall, the chances are good (and rightly so) that you will be flagged by your inspector.
2. Listed Hardware: Does your opening have the correct hardware and is it fire rated? Items such as ball bearing hinges, automatic door closers, door latching devices (locks, panic devices) and proper gasketing are all required to add up to the opening. Make sure your hardware bears a UL or comparable listing before you install it into your partition.
3. Proper size and listed fire glass: All fire ratings have a maximum amount of glass given the glass type and tested the kit. Check for etching on the glass and empossments on the metal fire kit. Remember the adopted code for your local authority holds the ultimate say on this.
4. Do you have the "human" out of your opening? Remember that you may have all the right material, yet still fail a fire door compliance inspection. The opening MUST operate autonomously without intervention from an outside source, including people.

Ask the following questions of your opening and you will ease the pain come inspection time.

- a. Is your opening labeled to cover specifications and code?
- b. Do you have all the components needed for the opening?
- c. Are all the components of your opening UL or fire listed?
- d. Is your glass size correct?
- e. Does your door shut by itself?
- f. Does your door latch by itself?

Hopefully, this helps your construction process. Please keep in mind that the local authority holds the ultimate say and interpretation in regard to their adopted codes. Don't be afraid to ask your local inspector. They are on your side in the goal to provide your end-user a safe and solid building.



Just Ask Clyde



Okay, I've Got My Frames, Now What?

There have been occasions when through mis-understanding or mis-communication frames get delivered to the job site with no clear-cut instructions on how to properly place them in the wall. (For those of you who relate better to pictures, click here.)

With the ever-expanding types and modes of construction, this problem is best addressed at the time of order. Essentially, there are two basic types of wall construction with many variations. In most cases, the wall can be either "masonry" or "frame".

Masonry construction can be block, brick, cast-in-place concrete, insulated concrete forms, adobe, structural clay tile or a combination of these (e.g. block w/brick veneer). In masonry construction, it is important to know whether the frames are going in prior to the wall's construction or after the wall's construction.

For frames being set prior to the wall's erection, it is common to use wire masonry anchors. These look a bit like the Greek letter Omega and clip into the frame as the wall is being laid up and are placed between the courses of block. Most frames also incorporate a base anchor which can be "short" or "full" length prior to building the wall. It is imperative the masonry "spurs, plumb and level" is reached throughout the process. It is also good practice to employ temporary wooden spacers placed in both rafter to ensure the frame does not assume an "hourglass" shape due to the hydraulic pressures imposed by the grout. (See Steps 2 and 3.)

On existing masonry construction, it is common to use a "punch & dimple" or "EM" (Existing Masonry Anchor) set-up. Usually three concrete holes are provided in the top portion of the frame to facilitate the installation of expansion bolts or screws with shields. The same rules apply with respect to the aforementioned masonry. In addition, frames placed in this manner should be grouted to ensure stability and durability.

Frame construction can be wood or steel and a variety of "clips" are available for frame attachment. Most clips into the frame by means of a hole and are held in place by friction. The "ears" are bent over the studs and held in place by the wall or, preferably, screws. Many times, a variation known as a "C-clip" will be used in steel construction whereby the frame is anchored by means of screwing through the stud into the backside of the anchor.

Wall space does not permit covering all types of wall construction, but please visit www.steeltek.com/products/frames.html and download the pertinent installation instructions for each wall condition.

If a specific application is desired, please contact your sales rep for ideas and advice. We may not know everything, but can at least give sympathy.

April Fools! Hope you get a laugh from our April 1st edition of the newsletter. The real version will be delivered tomorrow.



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