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Rolling Steel Fire Doors - Frequently Asked Questions

Note: All responses involving drop testing assume the door has been first visually inspected and operationally tested per NFPA 80 requirements and done by a trained door systems technician.

1. *Can multiple rolling steel fire doors be controlled by a single fusible link?*

Yes, under certain conditions. If there are 2 doors installed back to back on the same opening, they would have to be effectively controlled by one link so that the separation of any link would cause both doors to close. If doors are side by side, an issue may be that fusible links are only listed to handle so much load (approximately 40 lbs.), so depending on the number of doors, and design of doors and closing system, use of a single fusible link may be limited because the load rating could be exceeded fairly easily. Per NFPA 80, two or more fusible links may be stacked to increase holding power.

2. *Can the release device on an existing rolling steel fire door be changed from thermal (fusible link only) to electronic (detector/alarm) activation?*

Yes, but per the Listing a fusible link is still required at the release point of the door unless otherwise approved by the authority having jurisdiction.

3. *What do we do about drop testing a door if we don't know how long it has been since the last time (if ever) it was tested?*

The door should be drop tested, but great care should be exercised. As with any drop test, a thorough visual inspection and operation check should be done first. Any damage, component failure, or conditions that prevent a fire door from operating/activating/closing/being reset successfully should be corrected prior to the drop test.

4. *Do we drop test a door that does not have a manufacturer directly identified on the door?*

Yes. The manufacturer can be identified through the unique file number found on the rolling steel fire door label or through other means. The listing agency should have a record of the manufacturer through that unique file number. Component part numbers can also sometimes be used to identify a manufacturer. Since NFPA 80 requires drop testing and resetting in accordance with the manufacturer's written instructions, if there is no means of identifying the manufacturer, the door must be replaced.

Note: Technical Data Sheets are information tools only and should not be used as substitutes for instructions from individual manufacturers. Always consult with individual manufacturers for specific recommendations for their products and check the applicable local regulations.

This Technical Data Sheet was prepared by the members of DASMA's Rolling Door Division Technical Committee. DASMA is a trade association comprising manufacturers of rolling doors, fire doors, grilles, counter shutters, sheet doors, and related products; upward-acting residential and commercial garage doors; operating devices for garage doors and gates, sensing devices, and electronic remote controls for garage doors and gate operators; as well as companies that manufacture or supply either raw materials or significant components used in the manufacture and installation of the Active Members' products.

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5. ***If a door breaks during drop testing, and the door manufacturer is known, who assumes responsibility for repair?***

The owner assumes responsibility whether or not the door manufacturer is known because the owner is responsible for maintenance. If the door breaks, it is a failed drop test. It proves that the door would not have worked properly in a fire and needs to be repaired, retrofitted or replaced.

6. ***Can the door be painted? If so, what parts can and cannot be painted?***

Yes, rolling steel fire doors can be painted but there are limitations. Refer to NFPA 80 Section 5.2.3.8. Painting should only be done to the extent that it does not inhibit door operation and the automatic closing function, particularly moving parts such as gears and other mechanisms. Fusible links and all door labels, where present, are never to be painted.

When a rolling steel fire door is field painted after installation, there is a chance that the additional weight of the paint on the curtain could affect the balance of the door and painting other components could otherwise affect operation and the automatic closing function of the door. The door should be tested afterwards per NFPA 80 Section 5.2.3.7.3.

7. ***We have a rolling steel fire door that no longer operates. Can we just leave it in the closed position?***

No. A rolling steel fire door that is no longer needed to function as a door cannot be left in the closed position and ignored. NFPA 80 requires that the door must either be maintained as an operational door, including annual inspection and drop testing, or the door must be removed and the opening is to be filled to maintain the required rating of the wall assembly. A rolling steel fire door is rated and tested differently from its surrounding wall material and thus cannot be considered the same as a wall.

8. ***Are existing installations “grandfathered” when inspected?***

An existing door must be inspected, tested and maintained per current requirements, but there could be attributes of the door or some manner of installation that are allowed or prohibited now that may have been different at the time the door was installed. Proper operation and performance, along with verification of acceptable fusible link placement, must be maintained. Installations must be upgraded as needed during inspections.

9. ***If two rolling steel fire doors are located at the same opening, must they be drop tested simultaneously?***

Yes, if they are mounted on the same wall. No, if they are mounted on separate walls.

10. ***Can a rolling steel fire door be replaced by mounting on the opposite side of a wall?***

For an interior wall, the answer is yes provided that the fusible link system incorporates a through-wall cable. For an exterior wall, the answer is yes but is dependent on the fusible link arrangement needed when switching from interior mount to exterior mount and vice versa.

A fire door suitable for use on an interior wall may not be suitable for use on an exterior wall, such as its ability to withstand wind pressures. Also, if it is mounted on the exterior side of the exterior wall, weather-protective covers may need to be added depending upon exposure.

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