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Rolling Steel Fire Door Periodic Inspection and Technician Training Requirements

This TDS introduces building owners, technicians and building officials to new NFPA 80-2022, Chapter 5 requirements for periodic inspection and testing of rolling steel fire doors.

Rolling steel fire door periodic inspection and testing is frequently met with misinformation and confusion about code requirements and owner responsibility. DASMA has provided a wealth of information regarding fire doors to help give clear guidance on these issues. With the publication of the 2022 edition of the NFPA 80 standard, new mandates are established that technicians and owners should be aware of before scheduling or performing annual inspections. A thorough knowledge of the system and of NFPA 80 requirements is mandatory to help ensure the fire protection and occupant life safety plan for the building.

NFPA 80, Chapter 5, 2022 states:

5.2.4.2 For doors complying with Chapters 11 and 13, periodic inspections and testing shall be performed by a trained rolling steel fire door systems technician.

What exactly is a trained rolling steel fire door systems technician?

NFPA 80, Chapter 3, Definitions:

“3.3.131 Trained rolling steel fire door systems technician: A technician employed in the rolling steel fire door industry with documented training by a recognized industry organization or by a manufacturer of a listed rolling steel fire door.”

Next, the International Fire Code (IFC) adopted the following language at the International Code Council Hearings, fall 2021: *“Rolling steel fire doors shall be inspected and tested annually by a trained rolling steel fire door systems technician in accordance with the applicable provisions of NFPA 80. Records of inspections and testing shall be maintained.”*

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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This new code language will appear in the 2024 edition of the IFC. Please be aware that the IFC is legally enforceable by building officials.

Service technicians henceforth must be able to provide proof of training by a recognized industry organization or by a manufacturer of a listed rolling steel fire door when inspecting and drop testing fire doors and shutters.

Periodic inspection and testing of rolling steel fire doors is the building owner's responsibility. It is intended to reveal repair or operational issues that must be corrected without delay to facilitate operational readiness. NFPA 80 outlines the installation, inspection, testing and maintenance requirements for fire doors in Chapter 5.

Important points to note are as follows:

- Acceptance testing must be completed at time of installation and the record signed by the technician must be kept for the life of the assembly
- Detailed acceptance and periodic inspection standards are provided in Chapter 5, NFPA 80
- Access for maintenance, inspection and repairs must be provided
- Labels must be visible and legible
- Doors shall be installed per their listing requirements and per the manufacturers installation instructions
- Periodic inspections must be performed at least annually and the record kept for a minimum of three years
- There shall be no field attachments made to the assembly
- During automatic closing, doors must meet an average closing speed of between 6 and 24 inches per second
- Repairs shall be made, and defects that could interfere with operation shall be corrected without delay
- If repairs cannot be made with parts that are listed or labeled or that are obtained from the original manufacturer or retrofitted in accordance with Section 5.3, the fire door assembly or any part thereof shall be replaced.

It is essential that building owners, technicians and building officials understand the complexity and life safety value of fire doors. A thorough understanding of installation, inspection and testing procedures is mandatory in addition to accurate record keeping. Building officials must be well versed in the application and performance requirements to evaluate records fairly. Ownership and technician responsibilities must be clearly understood and followed to ensure these systems will operate as designed when called upon to protect lives and property.

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