

Finger Entrapment in Doors

School advice note

**CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
C O U N C I L**

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1. Introduction

It is estimated that up to 15,000 children trap their fingers in doors in the home each year in the UK (RoSPA home safety position statements 2014) and research has shown that this is a frequent cause of injury in day care and educational settings as well. The most recent annual statistics (2008) indicate that over 30,000 children under the age of 15 visited UK hospital accident and emergency departments with finger/thumb injuries caused by doors and door frames with more than 1,500 needing some form of surgery. The types of injuries that may result from door incidents range from crushing, bruising and fractures to, in the most serious cases, amputation; however, whatever the outcome, every finger trapping incident is likely to cause pain and distress to a child.

This advice note establishes a safe system to minimise the risk of finger entrapment in doors. The criteria for management is based on a risk assessment approach, which places duties on the LA.

It is the responsibility of Premises Controllers (Headteachers in the case of schools) to carry out the policies agreed and maintained by the LA and where applicable the governing body.

Accordingly it is the responsibility of the Premises Controller to manage the day to day practicalities of this advice note.

The LA recommends the arrangements outlined within this advice note are used by all its educational establishments and added to the Arrangement Section of their Safety Policy.

All employees are under a statutory duty to co-operate with the LA and governing body so far as is necessary to enable these parties to meet legal obligations.

2. Scope

To prevent accidents from students, staff and others trapping fingers in doors by establishing and maintaining a safe system of work.

3. Management Action

For whoever is responsible for managing a premise or arranging a visit to another premise to ensure suitable control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of finger entrapment.

4. General

Whilst all doors in educational establishments are potentially a risk to children, national trends of previous accidents in schools has shown that classroom doors, toilet entrance doors and toilet cubicle doors represent the highest risk of finger trapping injuries.

Trappings that might occur on the latch side of a door can be reduced by a suitable door closure mechanism. Where a trapping hazard on the door hinge side has not been eliminated by design, British Standard BS 7036 Part 4: Item 7.1 recommends 'the use of a finger protection device that either fills the finger trap or minimises the gap so as not to create a finger trap'.

5. Related documents

British Standard BS EN 16005:2012 (Power operated pedestrian doorsets. Safety in use. Requirements and test methods)

British Standard BS EN 7036-0:2014 (Power operated pedestrian doorsets. Safety in use. Code of practice for risk assessment and risk reduction)

6. Responsibility for the maintenance, repair and replacement of doors in schools

6.1 Responsibility

Local authority community, foundation and voluntary aided establishments are responsible for maintaining all aspects of their buildings, this includes internal and external doors, hinges, latches and other ironmongery.

6.2 Requirements

As with all health and safety hazards a risk management approach is required with the Headteacher having responsibility for ensuring that a finger trap risk assessment is completed with appropriate and timely follow up action taken.

The law requires employers to identify significant hazards and protect people as far as 'reasonably practicable'. This involves weighing up the degree of risk against the time, cost and effort involved in either eliminating or reducing that risk.

In terms of preventing finger trapping injuries from hinge side of doors, finger guarding devices are widely available, relatively low cost items that do not necessarily require specialist fitting. If fitted to fire doors guidance should be sought from the supplier, manufacturer or fire specialist to ensure that the device does not compromise the integrity or fire rating of the door.

Due to the vulnerability of young children and the potential severity and extent of any injuries they could sustain, it would be very difficult to justify not fitting them to the doors that present a risk in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One settings. **On that basis, City of Wolverhampton Council would recommend as a minimum standard that finger safety devices must be fitted to protect the hinge side edge of classroom doors, toilet entrance doors and toilet cubicle doors serving foundation and key stage one classes.**

All other areas and other school decisions regarding door safety should be based on level of risk.

Where older children are involved finger guarding is not mandatory and may not be an appropriate control measure, however the risk of finger entrapment should still be considered as finger entrapment incidents are known to occur to pupils across all age groups.

6.3 A finger trap risk assessment – the approach

A systematic inspection of each internal and external door should be carried out to determine the degree of risk and what further action is required to eliminate or reduce the level of risk. It can be helpful to observe pupil activity during the inspection and seek input from other members of staff.

A finger trap risk assessment template has been developed for your use to help identify whether a door is considered a high, medium or low risk. The template is provided in appendix 1.

6.4 Factors to be considered

- Review your school accident records to establish any doors that may have been involved in previous finger trapping incidents or near misses.
- Check the condition of the door, frame and hinges.
- Check the areas where finger entrapment could occur, i.e. both door jamb and leading edge.
- Ensure fire doors and emergency exits are not compromised by additional safety devices.
- Are there doors that should be fitted with door closure mechanisms?

- Check that all doors already fitted with self-closures have a two stage closing action, i.e. rapid initial and then slow final close and are regularly maintained. Closers leaking oil are likely to be unserviceable and need to be replaced.
- Take account of the age group and other characteristics such as special educational needs, behaviour and disabilities of pupils in determining the level of risk.
- Consider areas where the children are not supervised, e.g. toilets and where pranks by children could occur.
- Think about circulation routes and places where pupils congregate, such as queueing areas for dining halls.
- Doors near entrances or where there is a notice board or some other attractions behind an adjacent door
- Doors that are susceptible to slamming from strong gusts of wind
- Heavy doors (without dampening mechanisms)
- Fire doors
- Design of doors, e.g. metal and timber doors without rounded edges
- Areas used by after-school clubs or community use, particularly if these involve younger children
- Changes to layout of rooms including toilets, which may introduce new hazards

6.5 Determining the risk

Having identified the risk factors during the inspection, each door should be given a risk rating of either high, medium or low. The judgement should take into account the age group of the children exposed to the risk and any special educational needs, the likelihood of harm occurring and the potential severity should harm be realised.

6.6 Risk control measures

The following measures should be considered to help prevent finger trapping incidents:

- Try to reduce or improve the need for pupils to gather near the doors
- Ensure that essential equipment is not positioned adjacent to or immediately behind doors e.g. a paper towel dispenser
- Give regular briefings to pupils on the dangers of finger trapping
- Ensure all staff are aware of the hazard of door entrapments and their role in being vigilant and reporting defects, behaviours likely to result in an entrapment and near miss incidents.
- Fit finger safety devices on doors that pose a risk
- Consider risk factors when replacing or refurbishing doors

6.7 Review the assessment

The assessment must be recorded, retained and reviewed periodically. An annual review would be appropriate, particularly in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One settings. The assessment should also be reviewed if anything has changed or following an incident of near miss.

7. Checks after installation

For both new and existing door safety devices in educational establishments a system should be put in place for regular brief visual inspections to check for damage or deterioration so that appropriate remedial action can be taken if necessary. In addition, all staff should be encouraged to be vigilant for and report damaged devices. Establishments should take opportunities to talk to children (as appropriate to their age and understanding) about the trapping hazards which doors pose, the purpose of the safety devices and the need to tell staff if they see any of these damaged.

8. New and refurbished classrooms and toilets

In all new classrooms or major classroom refurbishments, including toilet entrance doors and toilet cubicle doors in foundation and key stage one schools, the risk of finger trapping should be designed out at planning stage. Where this is not possible, finger guarding devices should be fitted.

It should be noted that not all types of doors will accommodate such devices, therefore it may be necessary to seek specialist advice.

Finger Entrapment Door Checklist/Assessment

School:	Date of Assessment:
Assessor:	Date of Review:

Note; for foundation stage and key stage one areas; as a minimum standard, finger safety devices would be recommended to be fitted to all classrooms and toilet entrances.

<i>Factors to be considered</i>										Risk rating H = high M = medium L = low	Action required? Yes or no	Action Taken?	Date completed
Tick to indicate as a factor													
Door location	Fire Door?	I – internal? E – external?	Self closure?	Heavy door?	Congregation / queueing area?	Near entrances?	Unsupervised area?	Susceptible to gusts of wind?	Other?				