



FIRE DOORS: To Move... ...or Not to Move

By Steve Hahn

It doesn't happen very often, but occasionally someone will ask if an existing rolling fire door can be removed from where it was originally installed and then reinstalled on a different opening. And before the question is answered, there are a number of factors and conditions that should be considered.

Is the other opening the same size?

- A fire door is manufactured for a specific opening width and height. It cannot be field modified to fit either a larger or smaller opening.
- A door might be able to be installed on a smaller opening without being modified if it can be properly mounted and attached.

Is the wall construction the same?

- A fire door may have been manufactured for a specific wall construction and mounting condition.
- The wall construction where the new opening is located must be in accordance with the listing of the door. Some doors – especially older ones – were approved only for installation on masonry wall construction.
- The wall bolts used to reinstall the door must also be in accordance with the listing of the door.

Is the wall rating the same?

- A fire door is manufactured with a specific hourly rating. It is not uncommon for a fire door rating to be less than the rating of the wall on which it is installed¹, but it must be as required by local codes and the Authority Having Jurisdiction.
- A fire door with a rating higher than that of the wall is normally acceptable.

Is the fire door still “code compliant”?

- If a fire door is being moved to an opening on a corridor or certain other locations, current building codes may require that the door also be S-Labeled as an air leakage rated “smoke door” assembly.
- In most cases, an existing fire door cannot be field labeled to comply – and if it can, it may be cost prohibitive to do so.

What is the condition of the door?

- Depending on the age of a fire door, how well it operates, if there is any damage to be repaired, and other potential issues, it may not be worth moving.
- After the door is reinstalled, it must also be drop-tested successfully two times in accordance with the requirements of NFPA-80.

Depending on the specific conditions involved, other factors may also need to be considered. No matter what, it is important to inspect, operate, and maybe even drop-test, a fire door to be moved before committing to do it. It may also be necessary to consult with the door manufacturer to obtain any information that cannot be determined by a site inspection. And, as with any fire door installation, will a relocated rolling fire door be acceptable to the Authority Having Jurisdiction?

¹For example, a 1½ hour rated fire door is commonly allowed on 2 hour rated non-masonry wall construction if it is listed for such an installation.

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