

NFPA 80 – 2013 Changes



From the well-known blog idighardware.com, Lori Greene brings some much-needed clarity to codes.

BY LORI GREENE, AHC/CDC, CCPR, FDHI

AS SOON AS I RECEIVE AN UPDATED CODE OR STANDARD, THE FIRST THING I do is look through it to see what's new. When I received my copy of the 2013 edition of NFPA 80, *Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives*, I noticed many interesting changes related to fire door inspections in Chapter 5, Care and Maintenance. It will likely be several years before this edition of the standard is referenced in a building code or fire code and adopted by a jurisdiction, but there's no reason we can't start including some of these changes in our recommendations now.

Field Modifications

Previous editions of NFPA 80 contain language supporting laboratory approval of field modifications, but this was further clarified in the 2013 edition. Acceptable field modifications are addressed in Chapter 4, General Requirements, in the paragraphs related to Appurtenances. But when a field modification is desired that is not covered by that section, Chapter 5 states that the listing laboratory shall be contacted through the manufacturer, and a written or graphic description of the modification provided. The laboratory may then provide written authorization to perform the work without a field visit from the laboratory or relabeling of the opening. If the manufacturer is no longer available, the laboratory may provide an engineering evaluation to support the field modification.

From Annex A of NFPA 80 – 2013:

A.5.1.4.1 Field modifications beyond the scope of the prescriptive allowances permitted by 4.1.3.2 through 4.1.3.4 typically result in voiding the fire rating of the assembly. Paragraph 4.1.4.2.1 provides an alternative method whereby proposed modifications can be documented and presented to the labeling agency prior to work commencing. Where the proposed modification(s) are within the parameters of the manufacturer's procedures and will not degrade the fire resistance of the assembly, the labeling agency is permitted to authorize such modifications without a requirement for a subsequent field inspection.

Inspection and Testing

While the 2007 and 2010 editions of NFPA 80 require documented inspection and testing of fire door assemblies annually, the 2013 edition includes additional requirements for the inspection and testing of door, shutter and window assemblies *upon completion of their installation* (5.2.1) and also *upon completion of maintenance work* on fire door assemblies (5.2.2.5).

- When a building code references the 2013 edition of NFPA 80, newly installed fire door assemblies must be inspected and tested.
- When fire door assemblies are repaired and the governing code references NFPA 80 – 2013, the assemblies must be inspected and tested immediately upon

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completion of the work to ensure that they are in compliance with NFPA 80.

- When a fire code references the 2007, 2010 or 2013 editions of NFPA 80 for maintenance of fire doors, all fire door assemblies must be inspected and tested annually.

Records of these inspections must be retained for at least three years, and the media used must be able to survive for the required retention period.

From NFPA 80 – 2013, the information required to be included in the inspection report:

5.2.2.4 A record of all inspections and testing shall be provided that includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

- (1) Date of inspection*
- (2) Name of facility*
- (3) Address of facility*
- (4) Name of person(s) performing inspections and testing*
- (5) Company name and address of inspecting company*
- (6) Signature of inspector of record*
- (7) Individual record of each inspected and tested fire door assembly*
- (8) Opening identifier and location of each inspected and tested fire door assembly*
- (9) Type and description of each inspected and tested fire door assembly*
- (10) Verification of visual inspection and functional operation*
- (11) Listing of deficiencies in accordance with 5.2.3, Section 5.3, and Section 5.4*

Acceptance Testing

Previous editions of NFPA 80 require inspections to be conducted by individuals with knowledge and understanding of the type of door being tested. The 2013 edition added a requirement for the inspections to be performed by a “qualified person” with this knowledge and understanding. This term was defined in the 2010 edition and is also included in the 2013 edition:

Qualified Person – A person who, by possession of a recognized degree, certificate, professional standing or skill, and who, by knowledge, training, and experience has demonstrated the ability to deal with the subject matter, the work, or the project.

This person is required to do a visual inspection before testing to identify any damaged or missing parts that could create a hazard or affect operation. The acceptance testing must include closing the door by all means of activation, and a record must be kept documenting the inspections and testing.


Inspection Criteria

In addition to the 11 inspection criteria previously included in the standard, two new criteria have been added (#1 and #13):

5.2.3.5.2 As a minimum, the following items shall be verified:

- (1) Labels are clearly visible and legible.*
- (2) No open holes or breaks exist in surfaces of either the door or frame.*
- (3) Glazing, vision light frames, and glazing beads are intact and securely fastened in place, if so equipped.*
- (4) The door, frame, hinges, hardware, and noncombustible threshold are secured, aligned, and in working order with no visible signs of damage.*
- (5) No parts are missing or broken.*
- (6) Door clearances do not exceed clearances listed in 4.8.4 and 6.3.1.7.*
- (7) The self-closing device is operational; that is, the active door completely closes when operated from the full open position.*
- (8) If a coordinator is installed, the inactive leaf closes before the active leaf.*
- (9) Latching hardware operates and secures the door when it is in the closed position.*
- (10) Auxiliary hardware items that interfere or prohibit operation are not installed on the door or frame.*
- (11) No field modifications to the door assembly have been performed that void the label.*
- (12) Meeting edge protection, gasketing and edge seals, where required, are inspected to verify their presence and integrity.*
- (13) Signage affixed to a door meets the requirements listed in 4.1.4.*

As in previous editions of NFPA 80, any deficiencies noted during the inspection process must be repaired “without delay.”

These changes to NFPA 80 will complement the previously-included requirements and will go even further to ensure that fire door assemblies are installed properly and remain in accordance with the standard throughout the life of the opening. Code-compliant fire doors that function as designed and tested will compartmentalize the building to protect building occupants and property and help to provide a safe means of egress if a fire occurs. 

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