

Managing the risk from finger trapping in doors

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1. Purpose

This procedure establishes a safe system based on a risk assessment approach to minimise the risk of finger entrapment in doors.

2. Scope

This procedure is for Headteachers and Responsible Premises Managers and explains the steps you should be taking to managing the risk of finger trapping on your site.

The main premises this procedure applies to include schools, nurseries, libraries and museums.

In Schools: community and voluntary controlled schools are expected to follow the guidance in this document as it clarifies how the Council's and school's legal responsibilities for health and safety will be met. Academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools may choose to follow this guidance as an example of good practice.

3. Policy relevant legislation

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

4. Roles and responsibilities

Headteachers and Responsible Premises Managers

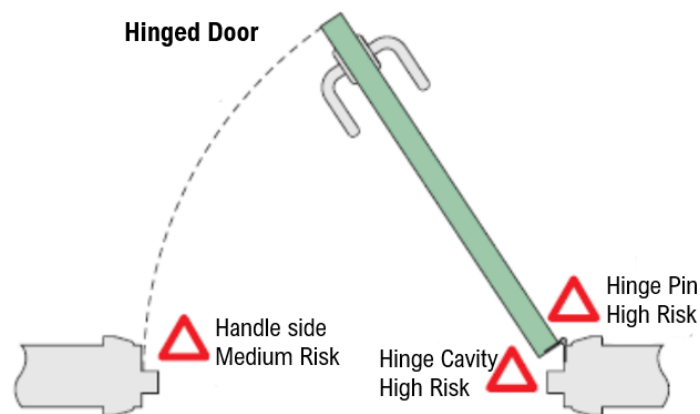
- To undertake a risk assessment of finger trapping hazards on your site.
- Implement measures to minimize the risk of injury from finger trapping.
- Ensure regular monitoring of control measure so they remain effective at managing the risk.

5. What is the hazard and who is at risk

Accident statistics show that a significant number of people trap and injure their fingers in doors each year. The vast majority of these are younger children under 9 who do not fully recognise the danger that doors and in particular doorjamb represent.

Injuries sustained as a result of finger trapping incidents in doors and gates often include compound fractures, serious lacerations and the amputation of digits. Even when the acute injuries are successfully treated, persons sometimes suffer long-term adverse effects including the increased likelihood of arthritis and/or loss of dexterity in later life; physical disabling effects, for example, loss of ability to play musical instruments; and psychological effects associated with deformed and/or missing fingers.

Examples of finger trapping hazards on doors



6. Risk assessment

A systematic inspection of each door and gate must be carried out to determine the degree of risk and if any further action is required to eliminate or reduce the level of risk. It can be helpful to observe people activity during the inspection and seek input from supervising staff.

Factors to be considered:

- Review your premises 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.
- 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.
- 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. Are they fitted with door release mechanisms?
- 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.

7. Determining the level of 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.

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

8. 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.

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, the 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 and any area the foundation/KS1 pupils use around the school such as the library and nearby toilets.

Examples of possible finger trapping control measures



For new builds and refurbishments efforts should be made to completely avoid, by design, any pinch points presented by doors and gates, before consideration is given to guarding or other precautionary measures.

In schools and nurseries 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.

9. Review the assessment

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

10. Alternative formats

If you (or anyone you know) needs this policy in an alternative format i.e., Easy Read, large text, audio, Braille, or a community language, please contact your line manager to discuss your requirements or call the council's customer services team on 01865 792422 and we will work with you to meet your needs.

11. Variation of policy and procedure

This policy and procedure are subject to ongoing review and may be varied by the council. Examples of variation include the need to comply with new legislation or best practice guidance.

Table giving example of doors and potential risk rating, the exact rating will only be determined from the premises specific assessment

High Risk	<p>Toilet and changing rooms in primary schools/nurseries and similar establishments.</p> <p>Doors and gates in primary schools/nurseries and SEN/learning disability environments. Those environments regularly used by young children or vulnerable persons (e.g. classrooms, corridors and exits to playgrounds).</p> <p>Gates in children’s playgrounds.</p>
Medium Risk	<p>Toilet and changing rooms in secondary schools, youth clubs or similar establishments.</p> <p>Doors in secondary schools regularly used by pupils (e.g. classrooms, corridors).</p> <p>Doors in nursery/primary schools only very occasionally used by young children (e.g. staff room, Headteachers office, exits only used in an emergency).</p>
Low Risk	<p>Boiler room, storage cupboard, kitchen doors and other areas not accessed by children.</p>