

# Safety Warning Notice No 5

## Access to door headgear

Under the Workplace Legislation, anyone in control of a workplace is required to ensure that doors are safe and are maintained in a safe condition.

Under general health and safety legislation, all businesses have a general duty of care to anyone who might be affected by their activities but is not their employee; among the consequences of this are:

- A managing agent or a landlord must ensure that doors under their control are safe, **even if they are not in a workplace.**
- A contractor installing, maintaining or repairing any door must ensure that they always leave it in a safe condition, **whoever owns it or whatever it is used for.**

Where access to safety critical elements of a door due to boxing in or lack of safe access to areas above ceilings cannot be achieved, the safety of the door cannot be assured and, hence, cannot be known if the door is safe to use or not. The headgear of a door often contains many of the safety critical elements:

- Fixings and attachments
- Bearings
- Key steels
- Steel wire ropes
- Springs
- Barrel retention elements
- Spring break devices
- Door curtain attachments
- Safety brakes
- Drive chains and belts
- Electrical wiring

All of the elements of a door need regular inspection, adjustment or lubrication to ensure its ongoing safety.



The most frequent cause of failure, injury and numerous deaths have involved some problem with the safety and security of the headgear of the door. It is for this reason that access to the headgear is crucial for maintenance. If the headgear of a door cannot be accessed, it cannot be maintained in a safe condition. The legal responsibilities of neither the owner/manager nor the maintainer can be satisfied.

Where door headgear is not accessible for maintenance:

- The owner/manager should be informed that the safety of the door cannot be assessed and that it is not known if it is safe to use or not
- Hazards may exist when operating or simply passing beneath the door
- Steps must be taken by the owner to make regular safe access to the headgear possible
- Use or passage under the door may need to be prevented or otherwise protected
- The maintenance contractor must explain the potential hazards and what access is necessary to the system manager, verbally and, as soon as possible, in writing using a System Safety Unknown Notice (see annex D.2 of TS 012:2018). This is to ensure the owner/manager is fully aware of the problem and the legal implications for all parties.

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Repairing or otherwise working on the door could leave a maintenance contractor in breach of health and safety legislation and, in the event of an incident, the owner/manager could also face criminal proceedings. There is also the possibility of civil proceedings for negligence affecting either party.

If any work has been done, the maintenance contractor must leave the system in a safe condition. Due to the

restricted access in these conditions, this will usually mean that the system must be left out of service. It must be understood that the maintenance contractor is not stating that the door is unsafe, only that safety cannot be ascertained with the door in its present condition.

More detailed information on standards and legislation can be found in DHF TS 012:2018.



## Contact us for more information

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