



HEALTH & SAFETY BRIEFING NOTE

DATE OF ISSUE: 3 October 2019

TO: Responsible Persons

FROM: Corporate Health and Safety

SUBJECT: Finger Entrapment in Doors Guidance

1. Purpose

This note is to provide guidance to responsible persons on appropriate measures to be considered in identifying and reducing the risk of finger entrapment posed by the opening, closing and use of doors in order to protect users, especially young and vulnerable persons from finger entrapment in doors.

2. Background

The number of finger trapping incidents recorded on Sphera is low however in recent months there have been several injuries sustained by young person's trapping their finger(s) in doors in premises operated by the Council. There is no statutory obligation that defines when finger guards should be used but there is a general duty to minimise risks to safety as far as we reasonably can for those who use our buildings to ensure that people using our facilities are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. In short, WLC has a duty to identify areas where there is a risk that pupils, visitors, service users etc. may potentially trap their fingers. This means reassessing current risks of finger trapping in doors and also making sure there are systems in place for checking and monitoring implemented control measures in the future.

3. Guidance for Responsible Persons

The age and vulnerability of those who use the building -

Young and vulnerable persons don't recognise the hazards of finger trapping in the same way older children and other adults will. Greater care and consideration is needed in identifying and managing the risk of finger trapping for these groups and those premises are considered to be naturally higher risk. This will include Early Years Centers, Nursery schools, Primary Schools, rooms used for playgroups/toddler groups and crèche facilities.

The door-

- Can you see pinch points on a door where fingers could be trapped? If you can note it on the checklist.
- Could the door be blown shut by gusts of wind or slammed shut easily by a person? If yes then this could increase the risk of injury.
- Are the doors heavy doors to hold open or do they shut quickly? If yes then this could present a higher risk to finger trapping e.g. doors on storage containers in council grounds that children may have access to

- Are there already finger guards fitted? If so, are they in good condition and undamaged? Note on the checklist where the finger guards are installed and what condition they are in.

The area -

Consider where the door is located

- Is the door in an unsupervised area e.g. toilets or corridors?
- Are there items next to the door that will cause people to congregate next to it? e.g. hand towel dispensers in toilets
- Will there be minimal supervision in that area? e.g. queuing at doors of classrooms or queuing to go into a dining area
- Is there a likelihood of young children or vulnerable persons being in a position to place their fingers in any pinch points that exist?
- How often will the door be used?
- What level of supervision and control will be exercised over children or vulnerable persons in the area?

Examples

- The door to a storeroom in a school or similar establishment that is only used by staff and kept locked when not in use would present a low risk.
- Doors used infrequently by children or vulnerable persons, such as emergency [fire] exits or staff toilets, would pose a low risk.
- Doors to toilets or changing rooms in a primary school or early years where children may congregate with no/limited supervision would present a high risk.
- A gate at nursery kitchen where pupils may enter to assist in food preparation would be a high risk.
- A door in a corridor in building where a mother and toddler group meet may be high risk.
- Doors to toilets in public buildings/ let area of buildings where groups with young children meet will be high risk.

As a general guide an assessment must take the following into account:

Schools

- The hinge side of doors and gates in school corridors, classrooms, doors to toilets/changing rooms and toilet cubicles frequently used by significant numbers of young children (pre-school, primary and those in let areas of the building) or vulnerable persons are all probably high-risk doors and measures will be required to eliminate or minimise the risk of young children or vulnerable persons being harmed through trapping fingers.
- Consideration if there are any other needs and behaviour that may increase the level of risk.

Other buildings (community centres, visitor centres etc.)

- Corridors, rooms used by community groups and doors to changing rooms and toilets which are frequently used by significant numbers of young children (pre-school and primary school age) or vulnerable persons where there also may be minimal or no supervision are probably high-risk doors. Measures will be required to eliminate or minimise the risk of young children or vulnerable persons being harmed.

Measures to reduce risks

There are a number of measures that could be considered to reduce the risk of finger entrapment that are highlighted by your assessment such as:

- Can you remove the need for young or vulnerable children to gather or play near doors?
- Can young or vulnerable children be supervised if currently unsupervised?
- Are staff aware of how to report a fault with a door or finger guard?
- Responsible persons should take time to talk to children (as appropriate to their age and understanding) about the trapping hazards doors can pose and purpose of the safety devices.
- The use of engineered controls such as hold open device and self-closing devices particularly where there a door has been assessed as high risk or is in an area outlined in the general guide above.

4. What do you need to do now?

The key to eliminating or reducing the likelihood of finger entrapment is by carrying out checks on doors. This assessment is non- technical and should be undertaken by someone who has local knowledge of how the building operates on a day to day basis including how doors are used and who will use them.

If you are a headteacher, manager or responsible person at a WLC establishment such as a school, library, community centre, visitor centre etc. where young children, elderly or vulnerable people have access, you will need to complete the attached checklist using your local knowledge and the information in this guidance to assist in identifying risks of finger trapping. Each door type should be designated a high, medium or low risk. You can then identify action required to be taken and monitoring that must take place in the future.

If your assessment identifies the risk of finger entrapment in the building this should be recorded within your premises risk assessments on [Sphera](#) as an additional hazard. You should highlight the controls currently in place as well as any additional controls necessary to reduce the risk further - such as the installation of finger guards.

If the assessment highlights the need for finger guards a [Project Initiation Sheet](#) should be completed and forwarded to Construction Services to deal with. Faults or defective doors or guards should be reported in the normal way via the [Property Help Desk](#). In the event of an incident involving doors this should be recorded on [Sphera](#) and your risk assessment reviewed as part of the investigation. Additionally your checklist should be reviewed if there are any significant changes made to the building or its use which impacts on the use of doors. The responsible person must ensure that risk assessments remain current and reflect the needs of building users.

Ongoing checks

The checklist should be reviewed on an annual basis and kept in your property compliance folder. Brief visual checks should be carried out on installed finger guards on monthly basis. Any signs of deterioration and damage must be reported through the [Property Help Desk](#).

All staff must be encouraged to be vigilant in checking and in their obligation to report any signs of damage, near misses they encounter involving doors or reporting incidents.

5. Links

- [Generic Risk Assessment - Finger Entrapment](#)

- [Door Checklist - Finger Entrapment](#)
- [Sphera - Incident Reporting](#)

6. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE SUPPORT

Health and safety will:

- Continue to support responsible persons in recording and investigating incidents involving finger entrapment.
- Provide further advice and support in relation to risk assessment and use of Sphera. Please contact your Health and Safety Adviser or email healthandsafety@westlothian.gov.uk