

## PRESS RELEASE

### A burning issue

*Dylan Miller from leading wooden window and door supplier, Swartland, offers an overview on the importance of fire doors in any building or home.*

21 January 2015, Johannesburg: When it comes to protecting your home or office from fires, prevention is key. “One needs to be prepared for the worst case scenario,” explains Dylan Miller, from leading window and door manufacturer, Swartland. “Smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and escape routes are all key in case of an emergency, but we often tend to overlook the fire door,” he says. Read on for more information on essential fire doors and vital safety tips.

### Why a fire door?

Dylan explains that a fire door is no ordinary door: “They are specifically designed to prevent the passage of flames, smoke and heat from making its way into other areas of a home or building. The appropriate fire door, and correct installation of it, deprives a fire of vital oxygen, thus slowing it down and providing time to make a safe escape and bring the fire under control.”

### What are the local regulations?

Your first port of call when it comes to functional building guidelines should be the SANS 10400 Building Regulations. They have an entire chapter dedicated to fire protection, and stipulate when a fire door is required and what rating is required.

According to Dylan, all fire door components should always, without exception, be of a reliable standard complying with the minimum requirements administered by the South African Bureau of Standards. He explains further: “Everything from the fire door frame, the actual fire door, right down to associated hardware, such as hinges and locks, must be fitted in accordance with the manufacturers specifications, and must duplicate the fire door set that has been tested by the SABS in order to comply with the SANS 10400 Building Regulations.” Swartland has the solution, with a top quality SABS-compliant timber fire door frame and a fire door, which are sold separately. Says Dylan: “Swartland’s fire doors are Class E 30-minute-rated for residential application, between garage and single store dwelling.”

### What to look out for?

When purchasing a fire door, Dylan advises to make a point of checking the following four resistance qualities to ensure you purchase a fire door that is appropriate to its location and will fulfill its role in the face of fire:

1. **Stability** ensures your fire door keeps openings closed, and resists fires without developing openings wider than 25mm.
2. **Integrity** makes sure that your fire door can resist fire without the development of vertical openings wider than 6mm and longer in total than the longest dimension of the door.
3. **Insulation** prevents the mean unexposed face temperature from increasing by more than 140° C above its initial temperature.
4. **Structural strength** is determined by an impact test, whereby a sample fire door is able to resist two successive impacts of a sandbag 250mm in diameter and of mass 27kg without the formation of any opening wider than 25mm. This test, which is fully described in Appendix A of Chapter 14 of the Standard Building Regulations, is carried out after the test sample has cooled subsequent to fire testing for the period of required stability.

### **Where to place them?**

According to Dylan, Class E fire doors are suitable for your average single story residential house with inter-leading garage. A Class E-rated fire door must be installed between the garage and the dwelling. Resistance period: 30 minutes fire resistance.

### **Does the door have to be closed?**

“The answer to this is simple - a resounding yes,” emphasises Dylan. In high traffic areas it may be helpful to fit your fire door with an approved door release mechanism to avoid inconvenience and prevent people from wedging the door open. “When a fire door absolutely has to be opened to move items through, it is imperative that someone is in attendance at all times,” says Dylan, who believes that ensuring you close every door behind you, whether a fire door or not, is one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent fires from spreading rapidly throughout a building and risking the safety of its occupants.

Dylan concludes with the following advice: “I may be stating the obvious, but it’s important to remember that whilst making your escape you should try place a wet piece of t-shirt or fabric over your nose and mouth, and keep as low as possible to the ground to avoid smoke inhalation. Once you get out, call the fire department immediately.”  
ENDS

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