

Fire Safety Technical
Note

NOTICE BOARDS & FIRE PROTECTED ROUTES

Notice boards & protected routes - what you need to know:



Prohibited

Prohibited storage in stairs (up to 3/4 storeys above ground) - stairs are to remain free of combustible materials, storage, fixtures, fittings (including notice boards) on all walls that are combustible to maintain the means of escape – limited paintings and pictures may be permitted, but **NOT** open paper, cloth materials or pin boards etc.

Prohibited storage in protected stairs (over 4 storeys above ground) - stairs **MUST** remain sterile with **NO** combustible materials, storage, fixtures or fittings (including notice boards) or electrical cables to maintain the means of escape – **NOTHING IS PERMITTED IN THESE TYPE OF STAIRS;**

Prohibited storage in protected stairs smoke lobbies - smoke lobbies forming part of a protected stair **MUST** remain sterile with **NO** combustible materials, storage, fixtures or fittings (including notice boards) or electrical cables to maintain the means of escape;

Prohibited storage in corridors – forming a 'dead end'¹ or protected corridor are to remain free of any combustible materials, storage, fixtures or fittings (including notice boards) on all walls to maintain the means of escape;

Prohibited notice boards - open and non fire rated notice boards in **all** stair enclosures and corridors forming 'dead end' conditions;



Acceptable

Notice Boards in Stairs (up to 3/4 storeys above ground) – fire rated enclosed notice boards that the contents are managed **are** permitted in stair enclosures and corridors forming dead end conditions. These fire rated notice boards to meet (Class 0/1) and the requirements of BS 476-7;

In other locations - the provision of fire rated notice boards are not strictly necessary in areas with more than one direction of escape and in circulation / general use areas (reception lobbies etc.) that do not form a means of escape; however, they may be provided for aesthetic and document management purposes. Departments may wish to use a non-fire rated locked display notice board.

¹ **Dead End** - place from which escape is possible in one direction only, or in directions less than 45° apart, that are not separated by fire-resisting construction.

1.0. Notice Board – Further Information

1.1. Further information on purchasing Fire Resisting Notice Boards and their specification can be obtained by contacting:

- UCL Procurement Services for help and guidance
- Web: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/procurement> (see contacts)
- JPA Furniture (UCL Office Furniture Suppliers):
- Web: www.jpa-office.com / Tel: 0800 0789330

Details:

Flame Resistant (FR) / Flame Retardant Notice Boards to meet either:

Cloth & pin board core to be tested to 1997 (Class 1) - BS 479: Part 7

Polycarbonate covers tested to BS 479: Part 7, Class 1Y & pin board core to meet Surface Spread of Flame (Class 0).

DETAILED INFORMATION

2.0. Introduction

2.1. This guidance note is to assist UCL Departments clarify the exact location and requirements for the provision of Fire Rated Notice Boards and the control of items in 'Protected Routes' (see diagrams at Appendix 1) that form practical fire precautions and arson prevention measures.

3.0. Notice Board Provision

3.1. **Fire Rated Notice Boards** - wall mounted notice, display and bulletin boards are utilised throughout UCL as an essential and convenient way of communicating information to staff and students. There are, however, two main concerns justifying the requirement for these to be fire rated:

- (a). to meet the requirements of the building / fire regulations regarding combustible materials in certain principal escape routes;
- (b). the provision of preventative measures against arson attack. Open notice boards, which have substantial amounts of loose and exposed paper, are vulnerable to arson. A fire involving a notice board can facilitate the rapid spread of flames and the production of a significant amount of smoke affecting designated escape routes.

- (c). Therefore, placing notice boards with combustible material in any protected route would contravene the legal requirement to maintain these as sterile egress and refuge areas. Furthermore, it would almost certainly have a detrimental impact on escape in the event of a fire.
- 3.2. Due to this increased risk, notice boards are given one of two 'surface spread of flame' ratings (defined in British Standard 476: Part 7):
- **Class 0:** notice boards, which comply with 'Class 0' requirements, are glazed with an aluminium frame, fire resistant toughened glass doors and 'Class 0' core material with a lockable fire resisting covering;
 - **Class 1:** Open type boards with fire resistant material covering;
- 3.3. The following locations must only have fire rated (Class 0) notice boards that meet the requirements of BS 476 Part 7:
- Stair enclosures (other than 'protected stairs' above 11m);
 - 'Protected Corridors, which extend the escape route from the stair to a final exit or to a place of safety;
 - Corridors protected from fire from adjoining accommodation by fire resisting construction - principally, corridors where escape is only available in one direction (dead - end corridors).
- 3.4. The use of open notice boards (Class 1) is permissible in corridors with escape in two directions providing the following criteria be met:
- The corridor has automatic detection within the section that the notice board is to be fixed;
 - The notice boards are located away from radiators/heaters;
 - Open notice boards must be restricted to one side of the corridor, unless they are 'Class 0' boards, and can therefore be used on both sides of a corridor.
 - Open notice boards should meet 'Class 1' requirements with a fire retardant material covering providing that the surface area of the 'Class 1' material does not exceed 20% of the total ceiling and wall surface area of the corridor. The remaining area must be 'Class 0'. In applying the 20% surface area factor, any poster, display board or similar items fixed to the wall or ceiling surfaces shall be included in the calculation as 'Class 1' items;
 - The notice board should be suitably managed and the name and contact details of the person responsible for the board must be displayed on each board;

- Notices must be pinned down at all four corners and must not extend beyond the confines of the board;
- Notices of a permanent nature should be laminated;
- Untidy boards tend not to get read so old material should be removed regularly;
- Notice boards in corridors must not be used for dispensing leaflets.

4.0. Location Identification - Protected Routes

4.1. There are several areas where there must be strict prohibition and control of combustible fixtures and fittings including, portable or fixed electrical equipment (other than lighting), vending machines, storage and furniture.

- (a). **Protected Stair Enclosures²** - stairs are to remain free of any combustible materials, storage, fixtures or fittings with all wall and floors having a surface flame spread of 'Class 0³' to ensure the maintenance of the means of escape. Protected stair enclosures are generally provided in buildings with stories above three/four floors (11m) above ground level, and/or where large numbers of occupants may need to use these escape stairs.
- (b). **Protected Corridors⁴** - corridor routes are to remain free of any combustible materials, storage, fixtures or fittings with all wall and floors having a surface flame spread of 'Class 0' to ensure the maintenance of the means of escape. Protected Corridors are generally provided in buildings between the route of the protected stair at exit level and the final exit; or, where large numbers of occupants may need to use these escape corridors on leaving the stairs.
- (c). Corridors in Single Escape Conditions ('Dead End'⁵ i.e. where escape is only available in one direction) - see note* below:
- (d). Stair Enclosures (General) - see note** below:

² **Protected Stairway** - stair discharging through a final exit to a place of ultimate safety (including any exit passageway between the foot of the stair and the final exit) that is protected from fire elsewhere in the building by fire resisting construction. Lobby protection to the stairs are generally formed by two sets of fire doors to form a smoke lobby meeting FR60 in construction.

³ **The Building Regulations** - fire safety regulations require that all materials meet minimum of Class 0 or Class 1 in respect to fire propagation properties, as defined in BS 476: Part 7.

⁴ **Protected Corridor/Lobby** - a corridor or lobby (other than any part that is any external wall of a building) that is adequately protected from fire in adjoining accommodation by fire-resisting construction. Lobby protection to corridors, are generally formed by two sets of fire doors to form a smoke lobby meeting FR60 in construction.

⁵ **Dead End** - place from which escape is possible in one direction only, or in directions less than 45° apart, that are not separated by fire-resisting construction.

***Note** - in these locations, both the Building and Fire Regulations require that the space is and remains sterile (e.g. that there are no combustible materials used or kept within them) at all times. Only certain permissible items may be placed in these areas providing they meet certain flame propagation properties. In the case of stairs, generally, all that is acceptable is a floor covering (i.e. a carpet or some sort of linoleum).

****Note** - only certain permissible items may be placed in these areas providing they meet certain flame propagation properties. An open notice board in stairs containing paper and combustible materials ARE NOT acceptable and the same applies to corridors in dead-end conditions.

5.0. Temporary Signs or Notices

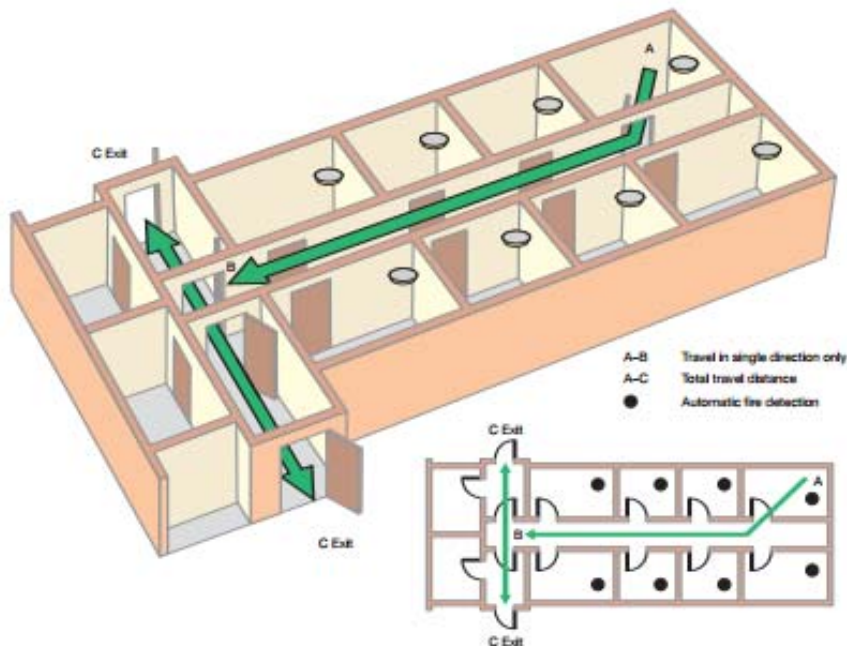
5.1. Temporary signs or notices:

- Temporary signs and notices to aid new students or navigate persons to conference rooms for example may not be placed on pillars and walls. Any required wayfinding or notification signs should sought with department staff.
- Any such notices must include the contact details of the person responsible for the notices and upon completion of the event; they must be removed as soon as possible.
- All other unauthorised notices and any notices without contact details will be removed immediately.

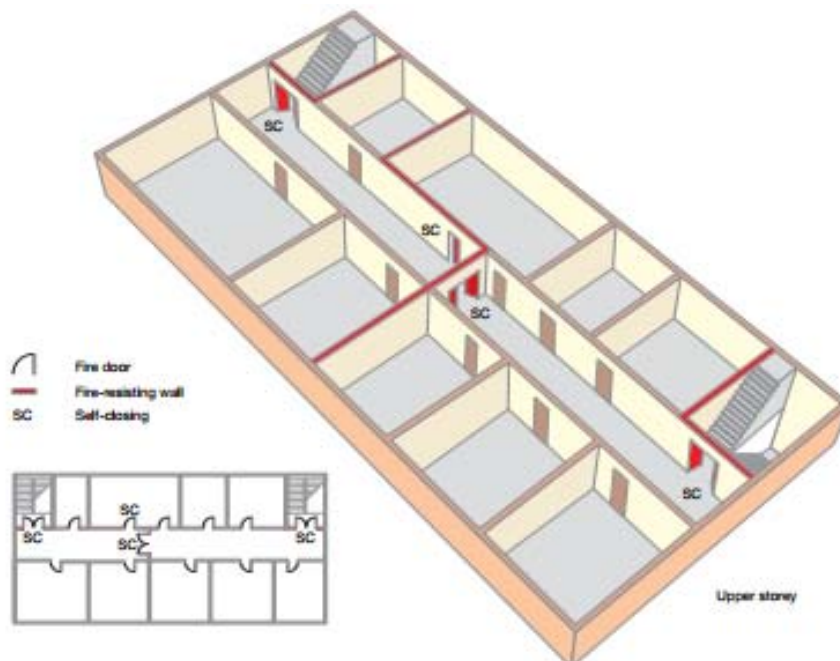
5.2. Where there is confusion or clarification is required by the user Department, they should contact the UCL Fire Safety Manager (fire@ucl.ac.uk). As these fire rated display enclosures are expensive, where the purchase of a number of them is being considered, there would be an obvious cost implication.

APPENDIX 1 – Example Diagrams

A1. Dead End Corridor - only 'Fire Rated' notice boards are permitted:

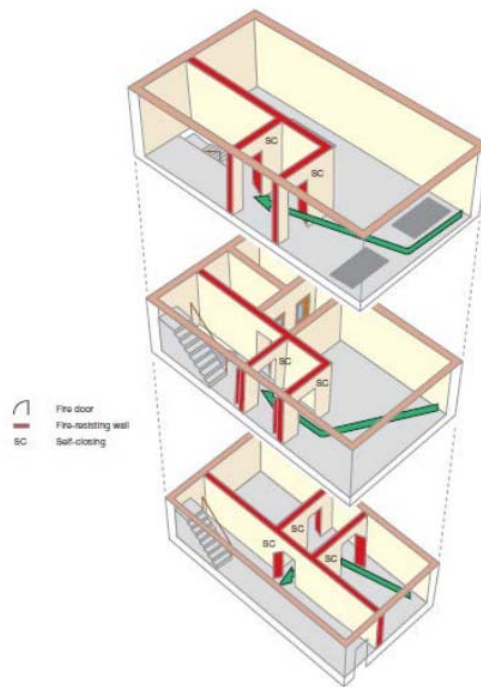


A2. Corridor With Two Directions of Escape – managed / control' notice boards are acceptable:



A3. **Taller or large buildings 11m in height** - with storeys and fire lobbies in building above 11m in height (*greater than four (4) floors*), combustible materials including notice boards in any stair enclosure is **prohibited**;

(a). **Stair Enclosure with Lobby Protection** - only **'Fire Rated Class 0'** notice boards permitted below 11m height from ground level (3/4 storeys):



A4. **Protected Corridor (under 4 storeys)** - only **'Fire Rated'** notice boards permitted (except A3 tall building and A3 applies):

