

CE marking for fire doors is almost here. The enabling standard covering fire resistance and smoke control characteristics (EN 16034) has now been published in the official journal of the Community.

Does anything have to change? Or is the CE mark additional to what exists? What does it mean?

#### **Firstly ..... Third Party Certification (TPC)                      For fire door assemblies and components**

We have in the UK a well established and effective TPC system fundamentally to provide assurance of product performance and scope of application for fire door assemblies. It is voluntary, with deep roots - and recognised by UK building regulations. It is the bedrock for the fire door industry, providing flexibility with a high level of testing, including auditing of product, both routine and on demand if there is cause.

TPC is different from CE marking; and it continues independently of CE marking. The specifier's request for third party certificated products can also continue, as before.

#### **Secondly .....What CE marking does                      Only for doorsets, from a single source**

The CE mark shows compliance with the Construction Products Regulation (CPR), which in turn defines the processes for the marketing of products across the European Economic Area (EEA). The CPR places requirements on manufacturers to establish type fire performance before placing products on the market, including scrutiny and verification of factory production control processes.

The EU objective is to encourage a single Community market without internal technical barriers to trade. But CE marking only applies to certain pan-European products as defined by standards derived by the CEN committee process – i.e. EN 16034 for doorsets. EN 16034 defines the product characteristics required by the provisions of the CPR and the processes to achieve the CE mark.

EN 16034 only applies where the manufacturer provides the full doorset as a complete package, i.e. single source supply. But in the UK the timber fire door market is customarily based on door assemblies using approved components from several sources as options for the buyer. Door assemblies can continue on national markets as they always have done. These are local-made for the UK market, and not exported across national boundaries into the wider EEA under the CPR.

#### **Thirdly .....Product quality**

The CE mark is not a product quality control system. That is not its prime purpose. There are aspects in CE marking associated with quality systems, but equally there are also significant gaps. In particular there is no requirement for repeat testing, nor independent auditing, once the product is CE marked.

Third party certification, however, is designed to focus on fitness for purpose of products in the market. TPC does use a quality system approach, with a focus on reliability. TPC does not force the product down one route. Variety, choice and flexibility remain for assemblies under TPC, whilst still assigning clear responsibilities to door and component manufacturers, as well as test and certification bodies.

Specifiers can still specify door assemblies - as the timber door industry with its component suppliers is traditionally set up to provide - with a high degree of assurance backed by third party certification.