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## Fire tests — Smoke-control door and shutter assemblies —

Part 2:

### Commentary on test method and the applicability of test conditions and the use of test data in a smoke containment strategy

*Essais au feu — Assemblages porte et volet pare-fumée —*

*Partie 2: Commentaires sur la méthode d'essai et applicabilité des  
conditions d'essai et emploi des données d'essai dans une stratégie de  
confinement de la fumée*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

In exceptional circumstances, when a technical committee has collected data of a different kind from that which is normally published as an International Standard ("state of the art", for example), it may decide by a simple majority vote of its participating members to publish a Technical Report. A Technical Report is entirely informative in nature and does not have to be reviewed until the data it provides are considered to be no longer valid or useful.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO/TR 5925-2 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 92, *Fire safety*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Fire containment*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/TR 5925-2:1997), which has been technically revised.

ISO/TR 5925 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Fire tests — Smoke-control door and shutter assemblies*:

- *Part 1<sup>1)</sup>: Ambient and medium temperature leakage test procedure*
- *Part 2: Commentary on test method and the applicability of test conditions and the use of test data in a smoke containment strategy*

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1) To be published. (Revision of ISO 5925-1:1981)

## Introduction

Technical Committee ISO/TC92, *Fire Safety*, has prepared ISO 5925-1, a test specification for smoke control doors.

In a fire, the decomposition of materials results in the production of heat and fire gases containing smoke particles. The associated expansion of gases can lead to the creation of a pressure differential across door faces often influenced by wind pressures, mechanical or natural smoke extract systems, stack effect or a combination of these. This pressure differential induces the movement of smoke or air past any openings or gaps, including those in a door assembly. Schemes to keep areas within buildings free of smoke use various techniques, including barriers to its movement, exhausting, dilution, pressurization, either singly or in some suitable combination of all of these. Where the pressure differential across the door is positive, i.e. gases are being driven through any gap; standard tests have been developed to measure the leakage of smoke when such conditions exist. The test method does not deal generally with doors installed in conjunction with active smoke control methods, such as pressurization or exhaust, and this part of ISO/TR 5925 has been prepared to assist designers to specify doors that have the appropriate smoke control characteristics for the situation in which they are being used.

In addition to identifying when the door is likely to have a passive smoke control function, this part of ISO/TR 5925 tries to make it clear as to when ambient or medium temperature smoke control is appropriate, and when the threshold gap is significant.

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# Fire tests — Smoke-control door and shutter assemblies —

## Part 2:

## Commentary on test method and the applicability of test conditions and the use of test data in a smoke containment strategy

### 1 Scope

This Technical Report provides a commentary that explains the general philosophy and factors on which the test specified in Part 1 of ISO 5925 has been designed, to describe the limitations of its application and to provide some general guidance for those who use the result of the test. Smoke control-door and shutter assemblies can be used as part of a smoke containment strategy for the purposes of life safety or property protection.

### 2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in Part 1 of ISO 5925 and the following apply.

#### 2.1

##### door assembly

assembly comprising a fixed part (the door frame), one or more movable parts (the door leaves) and its hardware

**NOTE** The purpose of the door assembly is to allow or prevent access of persons and/or goods. The term hardware includes such items as hinges, latches, door handles, locks, keyholes (excluding keys), letter plates, sliding gear, closing devices, electrical wiring and any other items that can influence the performance of the assembly being tested.

#### 2.2

##### shutter assembly

assembly comprising fixed parts, e.g. a barrel housing and vertical guides and one or more moveable parts, normally in the form of a curtain constructed from linked metal laths, or other flexible material and a barrel on which the curtain is wound together with any powered mechanism, e.g. an electric motor and its associate power supply

**NOTE** The shutter assembly is to allow the passage of goods, vehicles or persons, albeit where the shutter is normally closed in use, a personnel door should be provided for the passage of persons.

#### 2.3

##### fire door

door or shutter assembly capable of maintaining for a specified period some, or all of the fire resistance criteria defined in ISO 3008, as appropriate for the door in use

#### 2.4

##### smoke control door

door or shutter assembly whose primary function is to restrict the passage of smoke as determined by a test in accordance with Part 1 of ISO 5925

## 2.5

### **fire and smoke control door**

door or shutter assembly meeting some, or all of the criteria for fire and smoke control as appropriate for the door in use

## 2.6

### **ambient temperature**

for the purpose of this Technical Report, ambient temperature is an air temperature of  $(20 \pm 10) ^\circ\text{C}$

## 2.7

### **medium temperature**

for the purpose of this Technical Report, medium temperature is an air temperature of  $(200 \pm 20) ^\circ\text{C}$

## 2.8

### **high temperature**

temperature representative of a standardized fully developed fire which is as specified in ISO 834-1

NOTE For ease of use, doors are identified by a code letter/number and these are shown in Figure 1.

## 2.9

### **make-up air**

air that is made available to dilute the fire gases in order to reduce their temperature

## 3 General principles

### 3.1 Smoke and its influence

Smoke is the term used to describe the airborne products of combustion generated by the fire, together with large volumes of air that become entrained into them due to their motion. These combustion products can contain solid and liquid particulates within a gaseous mass.

Almost all fires produce smoke, which, when enclosed by a building, has the potential to become extremely hazardous to its occupants and damaging to property. Most deaths in fires are due to smoke inhalation, rather than to the victim having been burned.

The gaseous combustion products, chiefly carbon dioxide and water vapour, usually include toxic gases, the most common being carbon monoxide, although hydrogen cyanide and other minor species can be present to some extent. Amongst these, irritant gases such as acrolein can have a significant effect on people attempting to escape fire.

The solid and liquid fractions of the products of combustion are also responsible for the poor visibility through smoke. This adds to the problems presented by the smoke. Not only is it physiologically hazardous in its own right, but escape through it is made more difficult by it obscuring escape routes. These fractions can themselves be irritants and can be particularly dangerous to people who are subject to asthma or other respiratory problems.

Smoke can also cause damage to property. Most fires produce soot and many generate corrosive gases such as hydrogen chloride. The effect of these on sensitive equipment can be responsible for large monetary losses due to equipment damage, the need for system clean-up and subsequent business interruption.

### 3.2 Smoke dynamics

All fires start from an ignition and grow at a rate generally determined by the environment in which the fire starts and the nature of the materials involved in the event. Sometimes the fire can smoulder for a considerable period, especially if the materials that have been ignited have a low rate of heat release or the environment does not readily sustain combustion. Smoke produced during such a fire has very little buoyancy and whatever buoyancy it has due to gas density differentials as a result of increased temperature is soon lost.



Smoke produced under these low temperature conditions is, therefore, subject to the movement dominated by the ambient air current, particularly any that is induced by mechanical means, such as ventilation and air conditioning. In the absence of ambient currents, these cool gases generally mix with the environment and do not stratify as is expected from hot buoyant gases.

Once the heat release increases, the smoke's buoyancy increases and it soon begins to dominate air currents in the enclosure. When the fire reaches a sufficient size, the smoke rises in a plume towards the ceiling. As it does so, it entrains large volumes of air, greatly increasing smoke volume but reducing its temperature and the concentration of chemical constituents.

The total entrained volume of air increases substantially with increasing height of the plume. With sufficient buoyancy, the smoke impinges the ceiling, spreading out radially to reach any side walls and then forms a layer that deepens as more smoke is produced.

Smoke flows out of the enclosure of origin through any upper openings that exist or develop. This outflow is balanced by an inflow of air usually at a lower level. The openings can exist by design or occur as a result of failure of one of the boundary elements.

An opening can be part of a smoke ventilation or extract system, where either vents open to allow smoke out or a fan-assisted ducting system exhausts the hot gases and smoke. In such cases, make-up air is required to come into the enclosure at a lower level, normally from designated sources, but also, possibly, from around doors. Doors designed to provide make-up air do not require smoke sealing around their perimeter.

Similarly, one of the boundary elements most likely to fail as a result of the exposure to hot gases is windows in the external façade, where high temperature differentials on the surface of the glass can lead to shattering. Under ideal environmental conditions, this exhausts the smoke, making the need for enclosure sealing unnecessary. However, unlike a designed-in vent that is designed to work in conjunction with winds from most directions, the failure of an external window on a façade with a wind imposed on it can have the opposite effect. Any wind-induced pressure in the enclosure can impose demands on the walls separating other parts of the building with respect to their ability to prevent smoke leakage through gaps.

Similarly, if the enclosure is unfenestrated or where the windows do not break as a result of the thermal exposure, then the pressure increases and the smoke layer deepens.

A normal door is the one element in the boundary of a structure that is naturally leaky, having a gap all around the moving leaf, unless a seal is introduced to restrict it. A smoke-control door is provided to restrict the flow of smoke, whether it is wind-induced or the result of natural buoyancy.

It should be recognized, however, that any smoke transferring through door gaps is likely to lose much of its heat energy in the process and, as a consequence, the temperature and buoyancy are also reduced. Experimental work has demonstrated that smoke leaving an enclosure via narrow gaps, such as those around a door leaf perimeter, soon become fully mixed with the air.

Within the enclosure, as new flammable material becomes involved as a result of increasing heat transfer to it, more air is required for the fuel volatiles to burn. If this is not available, either the fire does not grow any further or the fuel volatiles burn instead outside the enclosure of origin, i.e. after moving via windows to the open air or to an adjacent ventilated space, if it is available.

Without engineering intervention, it would be natural for the space containing the fire to contain hot buoyant gases and for the immediately adjacent, protected spaces to fill with clean air without any buoyancy.

## 4 Smoke control

### 4.1 Design objectives

Since smoke can have a major impact on the overall design of the building, it needs to be considered at the earliest possible stage of the design process. Normal escape provisions in buildings, e.g. restrictions on travel distances and emergency lighting provisions, do not assume significant levels of smoke management. Where

good smoke management is introduced, either by exhaust, ventilation, pressurization or by containment, then these provisions may be relaxed. Any such relaxation has a profound influence on the building design/layout and, therefore, it is important that the method of smoke control to be used be nominated early in the design process.

Smoke-control systems for life safety are designed to maintain a tenable environment for occupants to facilitate their safe escape from the building to a place of relative safety or a refuge, preferably separated structurally from the area being evacuated. Smoke-control systems for property protection are generally designed to reduce the level of contamination in a space by keeping smoke logging down to acceptable levels.

There are a number of ways that smoke control can be achieved:

- natural ventilation;
- mechanical smoke exhaust;
- pressurization;
- smoke containment.

**NOTE** An alternative to pressurizing a space is to depressurize the adjacent spaces(s), but this is difficult to achieve in a fire, as the depressurization fans are generally overwhelmed by the fire gases.

The choice of system may be dictated by the area in which the smoke is to be controlled. With such “active” measures, then, natural or powered exhaust is more appropriate than “passive” smoke containment has a limited function, and can possibly make the situation worse by lack of the make-up air, and hence reduced entrainment and higher gas temperatures, as discussed in 4.2, unless separate provision is made for “make-up” air.

If, however, it is an adjacent space that is to be protected, then a method that has been used historically to keep such an area free of smoke has been pressurization of the space, especially staircases. Actively exhausting smoke from the area on fire also provides some protection to the adjacent spaces. This protection can be compromised if the smoke temperature in the space exceeds the operating temperature of the fan, causing it to cease operating. At such times, the space becomes vulnerable to smoke logging.

A simple-to-introduce alternative to exhaust or pressurization is the use of smoke containment, initially between the enclosure on fire and the space being protected or between adjacent protected areas.

## 4.2 Protection of adjacent and remote/removed spaces by smoke containment

For smoke containment to work, it is important that the elements bounding the enclosure of fire origin and the adjacent enclosures remain impermeable to the flow of smoke and hot gases for as long as is necessary to maintain tenable conditions for life safety or an adequately pollution-free environment for property protection. There are several fairly distinct stages in this scenario that it is important to address individually for each space in which smoke is contained.

### 4.2.1 Scenario within the room of fire origin

In the period immediately following a small ignition, assuming that the materials initially involved in the fire have a high thermal inertia and a relatively low rate of heat release, the smoke cools and mixes readily with the surrounding atmosphere. As such, the barrier formed by the bounding structure can initially experience exposure to cool, ambient smoke. As such, any seals designed to restrict that smoke, including seals around door edges or the sealing systems used to retain glass within the door leaf, are required to be effective at only ambient conditions. If the fire continues to grow in intensity and size, with a corresponding increase in the rate of heat release, then the plume becomes buoyant, increasing in both temperature and volume. The temperature of this plume becomes elevated and any ambient temperature test method for evaluating smoke containment can be inappropriate. It is possible by reference to the appropriate scenario in 4.2.2 to 4.2.4 to produce an estimate of the smoke temperature and hence identify the most suitable test regime to reproduce those conditions.