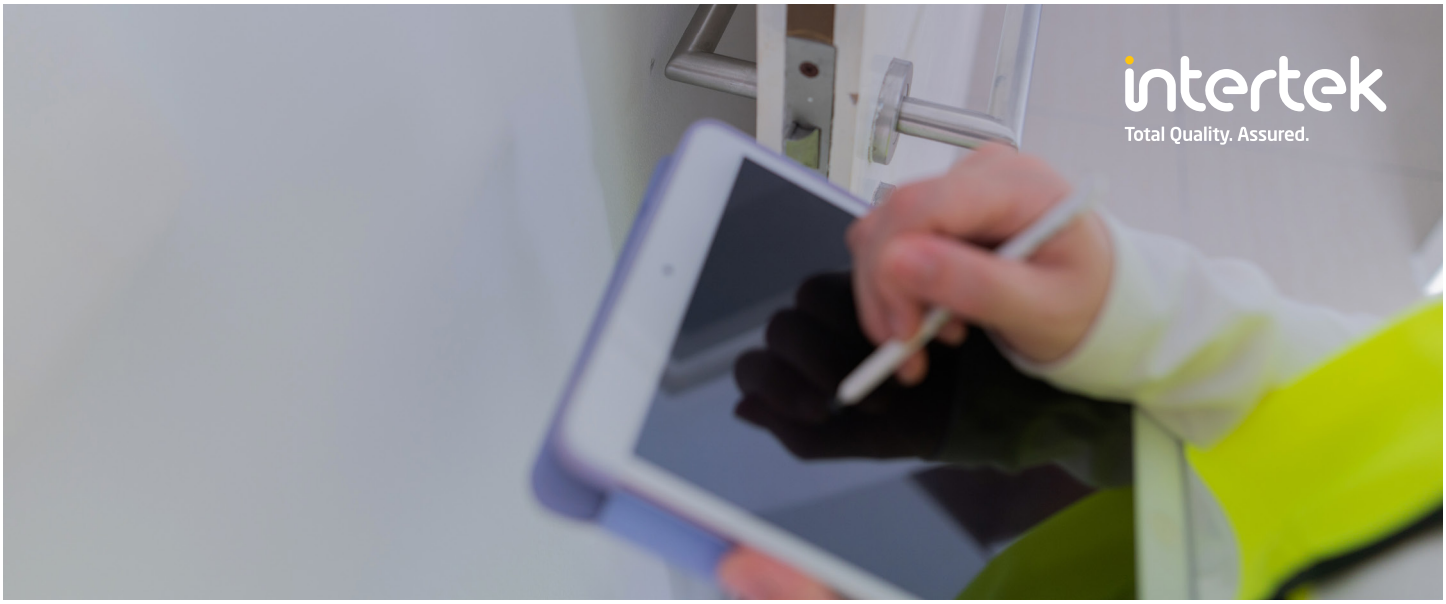


Why Fire Door Labels Become Unreadable, Missing, or Incorrect and What Happens Next

A fire door may still close, latch, and appear in good condition, but if its certification label is missing, unreadable, painted over, or incorrect, the opening can still raise questions during inspection. In those situations, building teams may need additional documentation, evaluation, or corrective work before the opening can be accepted.

That does not automatically mean the door must be replaced. In many cases, the next step is to determine whether the existing opening can be verified and, when appropriate, field labeled.

What Information Does a Fire Door Label Provide?

Beginning with the 2016 edition of NFPA 80, fire door labels must identify:

- Fire protection rating
- Applicable fire test standard
- Third-party certification agency mark

Applicable fire door test standards can include NFPA 252, UL 10C, UL 10B, and CAN/ULC 104, depending on the product and listing.

"A missing or unreadable fire door label does not necessarily mean the opening needs to be replaced. Field evaluation can determine whether the door or frame qualifies for labeling."

For Intertek -certified products, the label may carry the Warnock Hersey (WH) Mark. NFPA 80, Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives, also calls for door and frame labels to be present, visible, and legible during inspection.

Why Do Fire Door Labeling Issues Occur?

Most labeling issues develop over time rather than at initial installation. Doors and frames are repainted, refinished, repaired, modified, or incorporated into renovation work, and those changes can affect the label or the opening itself.

Common situations include:

- **Painted-over or damaged labels:** Required certification information may no longer be readable.
- **Missing labels:** A door or frame may have been installed without a label, or the label may have been removed later.
- **Incorrect labeling:** The label may not correspond with the installed product or required opening.
- **Field modifications:** Changes to hardware, machining, glazing, or other components may need review against the applicable listing.

Paint on a label does not necessarily render the opening noncompliant. The question is whether the required information remains legible and verifiable. Field modifications also require individual review. A modification does not automatically invalidate the fire door certification, but if the modification is beyond what is allowed in the field by NFPA 80, the change will require review against the listing or, in some cases, testing.

What Happens When the Label Cannot Be Verified?

A missing or unreadable label creates a verification issue that may require additional documentation, field evaluation, corrective work, and reinspection before the opening can be accepted.

Possible outcomes include:

Potential Issue: Certification cannot be verified

What May Be Required: Additional documentation and field evaluation

Potential Issue: Installed condition does not match the listing

What May Be Required: Corrective work or further evaluation

Potential Issue: Previous modifications need review

What May Be Required: Evaluation against applicable listing requirements and, in some cases, testing

Potential Issue: Deficiencies are identified

What May Be Required: Corrections followed by reinspection

Potential Issue: Existing opening is otherwise eligible

What May Be Required: Field labeling may provide an alternative to removal and replacement pending review and inspection

The label is only one part of the inspection. Field inspectors will also review glazing, hardware, alignment, clearances, closing and latching operation, damaged or missing components, gasketing, and evidence of previous modifications. A labeling issue can also point to other conditions with the opening, including improper hardware, damaged components, or modifications that fall outside applicable requirements. Applying a new label does not correct those issues.

How Does Intertek Fire Door Field Labeling Work?

Field labeling is an evaluation and certification process, not simply replacing a missing sticker. Intertek field representatives use applicable NFPA requirements, current and historical listing information, and supporting documentation to review and evaluate existing doors and frames.

Depending on the opening, the process can include:

1. **Reviewing the opening.** The field representative examines the door, frame, applicable components,

modifications, and available documentation.

2. **Comparing the installed condition with listing information.** The opening is evaluated against relevant certification documents.
3. **Documenting deficiencies.** Intertek can identify conditions that require correction.
4. **Reinspection after corrective work.** The opening can be reviewed again once required repairs or modifications are complete.
5. **Applying the certification label.** If the door or frame qualifies, Intertek can apply the appropriate Warnock Hersey (WH) fire-rating label.

Not every opening will qualify for field labeling. Product identification, documentation, existing conditions, prior modifications, and applicable listing requirements all affect the evaluation. Intertek's Directory of Building Products can also be used to review WH-certified product listings and certification information.

How Can Building Teams Avoid Labeling Issues?

A few steps can reduce the chances that labeling becomes an issue later in the project or building life cycle:

- **Before installation**, confirm that required labels are present and correspond with the door schedule, rating, and intended opening.
- **Before painting or refinishing**, identify labels on doors and frames and protect them from being painted over, removed, or damaged.
- **Before modifying an opening**, review proposed hardware changes, machining, glazing changes, or other work to determine whether the change is permitted as part of the allowable job site preparations referenced in NFPA 80. If not, contact the listing agency for additional review and evaluation.
- **After occupancy**, retain inspection reports, product information, repair records, and documentation related to modifications. That information can make it much easier to evaluate an opening years later.

What Should You Do If a Fire Door Label Is Missing?

A missing, incorrect, or unreadable fire door label does not necessarily mean the opening needs to be replaced. The next step is to determine whether the door or frame can be identified, evaluated, and tied to the applicable listing and certification requirements.

Intertek provides fire door field-labeling services for healthcare, hospitality, education, government, commercial, and industrial facilities, including new construction, existing buildings, and renovation projects. Field representatives can review the opening, identify deficiencies, evaluate modifications, and assess whether the door or frame is eligible for a Warnock Hersey (WH) fire-rating label.

Addressing labeling questions before final inspection or project closeout gives building teams more time to identify the appropriate path and may help avoid unnecessary replacement when field evaluation is an option.

Click here to learn more about Intertek's Fire Door Field Labeling services.

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