

# Fire Doors and Automatic Operators

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This month's Lessons Learn Bulletin focuses on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requirements, when installing power operated automatic doors openers. This is common application on fire doors throughout M. D. Anderson properties.



**Lesson Learned Statement:** Automatic power operators are often used on doors throughout the campus for Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) compliance or occupant convenience. The installation and operation must comply with the requirements of NFPA codes and standards.

**Discussion:** Over the years, Environmental Health and Safety has seen an increased number of automatic power operators installed in our buildings as part of either new building construction, renovations of existing areas or maintenance requests. Often, automatic power operators are installed on fire doors in fire rated barrier walls.

The NFPA 101 Life Safety Code and NFPA 80 Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives have very specific requirements that must be followed when installing in fire barrier walls. The Life Safety Code, Section 7.2.1.9, "Powered Door Leaf Operations," specifically addresses the use and installation requirements. NFPA 80, Section 6.1.4 requires fire doors to be latched at all times. In addition, Section 6.1.4.4 states: **Power-operated fire doors shall be equipped with a releasing device that shall automatically disconnect the power operator at the time of fire, allowing a self-closing or automatic device to close the door regardless of power failure or manual operation.**

To accomplish this, a fire alarm input must be interfaced with the automatic power operator to close the door. This is extremely important, since most power operators are equipped with a "door hold" switch that prevents the door from closing after each use. Additional coordination may be required if doors are equipped with access control hardware.

**Remember:** Should fire doors fail to close, it compromises the fire separation.

If you have questions concerning this bulletin or need assistance, please contact Environmental Health and Safety's Fire and Life Safety group at 713-792-2888 or email us at [askEHS@mdanderson.org](mailto:askEHS@mdanderson.org).