



Preventing Finger Trapping in Doors

NOTE: Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and settings must adhere to guidance issued by their employer (the Local Authority) and use this document for reference purposes only.

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1. Introduction

Accidents involving vulnerable adults and children trapping their fingers in doors are more prevalent than you might think. According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) every year 30,000 individuals trap and seriously crush their fingers in doors. More than 1500 of these individuals, particularly children will need surgery, sometimes requiring on-going reconstructive surgery. These incidents occur in the home, in nurseries, leisure centres, care homes, school, shops and other public places. The types of injuries that may result from door incidents range from crushing, bruising and fractures to, in the most serious cases, amputation; however, whatever the outcome, every finger trapping incident is likely to cause pain and distress to an individual.

All doors are potentially a risk. Those doors in buildings such as schools or nurseries represent the greatest risk to young people. Doors in areas such as, circulation areas, toilet entrances and cubicle doors represent the highest risk of finger trapping accidents, along with those which are known to slam shut in high winds and external doors.

Young children and those with special needs are particularly susceptible to door-trapping injuries, but older pupils have also been victims in the past. Reports from adults with no difficulties, having their fingers injured by doors highlight the fact that these accidents can happen to anyone.

2. What do we need to do?

As with all health and safety hazards, an assessment approach is required, the Responsible Person for the building must ensure that if a need for a finger trap assessment has been identified that the assessment is completed with appropriate and timely follow up actions taken.

The law requires employers to identify significant hazards and protect people as far as 'reasonably practicable'. This involves weighing up the degree of risk against the time, cost and effort involved in either eliminating or reducing that risk.

Preventing finger trapping injuries from the hinge side of doors is easily achievable with finger guards, these devices are widely available, of relatively low cost, and do not necessarily require specialist fitting.

If adults use a building or part of a building predominantly it is unlikely you would need to install finger trap prevention. However, due to the vulnerability of young people and the potential severity and extent of any injuries they could sustain, it would be very difficult to justify not fitting them to the doors that present a risk in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One settings. On that basis, the minimum recommended standard is that finger safety devices must be fitted to protect the hinge side edge of all classroom doors, corridors, toilet entrance doors and toilet cubicle doors in areas used by foundation and key Stage One age children.

For schools and all other buildings, where other older pupils are likely to be present, decisions regarding door safety should be based on the level of risk. Finger guarding is not mandatory and may not be an appropriate control measure, however, the risk of finger entrapment should still be considered as finger entrapment incidents are known to occur to individuals across all age groups.

3. Who is responsible?

Client / Architects / Designers are responsible for ensuring that:

- In all new buildings, or any remodelling or renovation works that cater for young people the design risk assessment must consider the installation of finger trapping protection devices.
- In all new buildings, or any remodelling or renovation works that cater to Foundation or Key Stage One children, suitable finger trapping protection devices are considered and installed on appropriate doors.

Health and Safety Service Level Agreement Provider (Caretaking Support Services) will ensure that:

- On request, you are provided with information on the types of protection devices available, the names of competent suppliers and installers.

The Responsible Person for the Building must ensure that:

- **Where appropriate** a finger-trap assessment has been completed for the building
- Appropriate actions are identified with timely follow up actions taken.
- A regular inspection and maintenance regime is established within the building.

4. How is the need for finger trapping protection assessed?

The Responsible Person for the building when assessing the need for finger trapping protection must consider:

- Who are the individuals who use the building?
- What are the activities that take place within the building?
- Is it used during the day, evening, or weekend? E.g. Nursery aged children using a secondary school gym or village hall for curriculum purposes.
- Have there been any accident / incident reports relating to finger trapping incidents?
- Has finger trapping been identified as a hazard identified on an activity risk assessment.

After gathering this information a decision would then need to be made whether to undertake a full individual door finger trap assessment. A decision tree making has been included in Appendix A to assist.

5. Determining the risk

Once it has been determined that there is a need for an individual door assessment. Assess each door to see if any additional action is needed, and record these findings on the checklist at Appendix C. The judgment should take into account the age group of the young people, the vulnerability of the individuals who are exposed to the risk, the likelihood of harm occurring and the potential severity should that harm be realised. The document at Appendix B will help you consider the appropriate factors.

For further guidance on the risk assessment process, please contact Caretaking Support Services.

6. Risk Control Measures

The following measures should be considered to help prevent finger-trapping incidents:

- reduce or remove the need for people to gather near the doors;
- ensure that essential equipment is not positioned adjacent to or immediately behind doors e.g. a paper towel dispenser;
- give regular briefings to pupils and other vulnerable individuals on the dangers of finger trapping;
- ensure that all staff aware of the hazard of door entrapments and their role in being vigilant and reporting defects and near miss incidents;
- fit finger safety devices on doors that pose a risk;
- consider risk factors when replacing or refurbishing doors.

7. Review the Assessment

The assessment of the door must be recorded, retained and reviewed periodically, an annual review would be appropriate, particularly in areas that vulnerable adults, Foundation Stage and Key Stage One settings use. The assessment must also be reviewed if anything has changed or following an incident or near miss.

8. Checks after Installation

For both new and existing door safety devices within buildings a system should be established for regular visual inspections. The checks are looking for any damage or deterioration so that appropriate remedial action undertaken as necessary. It is important to record these inspections; this can be done as part of your regular inspection routine. In addition, all staff should be encouraged to be vigilant and report damaged equipment. The Responsible Person should take opportunities to talk to young people (as appropriate to their age and understanding) about the trapping hazards doors pose, the purpose of the safety devices and the need to tell staff if they see any of these damaged.

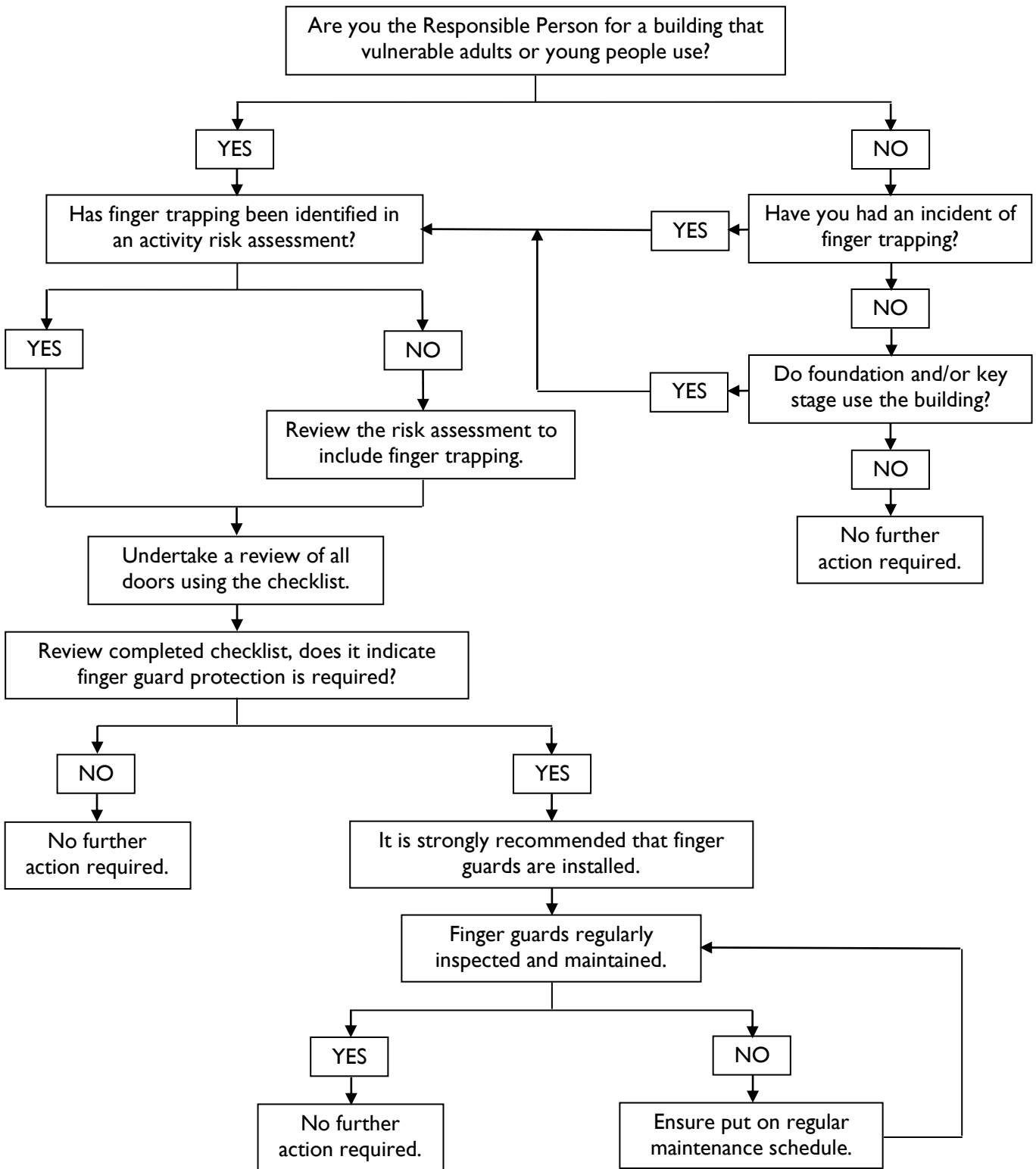
9. New and refurbished buildings and toilets

The design process must take into consideration who will use the new or refurbished building, and make decisions accordingly. For instance if the building is for the use of Foundation and Key Stage One pupils, the risk of finger trapping in toilet entrance and cubicle doors should be designed out at the planning stage. Where this is not possible, it is strongly recommended that finger-guarding devices are fitted.

10. Responsible Person – what you need to do

- Identify if a full finger trap Assessment is needed
- Carry out a finger trap assessment if required
- When fitted ensure there is a system in place for regular inspections of door safety devices
- Raise awareness of finger hazards amongst staff, vulnerable adults and children
- Review your finger trap assessment annually or sooner if changes, incident or near misses occur.
- Consider door safety at the design stage of new or refurbished building
- Document your local procedures, and monitor their effectiveness.

DECISION MAKING TREE



APPENDIX B

A finger trap risk assessment – the approach

Initially the Responsible Person for the building needs to assess the need for finger trapping protection. If the need for a full assessment has been determined, a systematic inspection of each internal and external door should be carried out. The assessment will determine the degree of risk, and if further action is required to eliminate or reduce that risk. It can be helpful to observe individuals using the door during the assessment.

A finger trap record template (Appendix C) has been developed for your use to help identify whether a door is considered a high, medium or low risk.

Factors to be considered

- Review your building accident / incident records to establish any doors that may have been involved in previous finger trapping incidents or near misses.
- Check the condition of the door, frame, and hinges.
- Check the areas where finger entrapment could occur i.e. both doorjamb and leading edge.
- Ensure fire doors and emergency exits are not compromised with additional safety devices.
- Are there doors that should be fitted with closure mechanisms?
- Check that all doors already fitted with self-closures have a two stage closing action i.e. rapid initial and then slow final close and are regularly maintained. Closers leaking oil are likely to be unserviceable and need to be replaced.
- Take into account the age group and other characteristics such as special educational needs, behaviour and disabilities of the buildings occupiers in determining the level of risk.
- Consider areas where unsupervised activities could take place e.g. toilets, or where pranks by children could occur.
- Think about circulation routes particularly those within a school and queuing areas such as the dining hall.

Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- Heavy doors (with or without dampening mechanisms)
- Fire doors
- Design of doors e.g. metal and timber doors without rounded edges
- Doors next to areas where people congregate
- Doors which individuals queue beside for lunch or other reasons
- Doors near entrances
- Doors that are susceptible to slamming from strong gusts of wind or when another door is opened within the building
- Consider what and how the different areas are used. Do after-school clubs or community use these areas, particularly if these involve younger children or vulnerable adults?
- Is there a notice board or some other attraction behind or adjacent to the door?
- Changes to layout of rooms including toilets, which may introduce new hazards

Record your findings complete any actions identified and review on a regular basis.