

ASFP Advisory Note 9:

Selection of Fire Seal Materials to Amend or Refurbish Existing Non – Reusable Service Penetration Seals



Introduction

It is normal practice when installing a service penetration seal to use materials/products from a single supplier/manufacturer which have been shown by test or assessment from a qualified body/person to be able, when installed correctly, to provide the required fire resistance performance. Over time such seals may be subject to damage or may require to be modified as a result of the need to remove or introduce new penetrating services. In such circumstances decisions must be made as to the materials used to make such repairs/modifications and this note offers guidance to the person(s) given the task of selecting the materials required.

There are several reusable fire stopping products available that permit alteration of penetrating services without the need for additional product. These should be considered where future addition or removal of services is anticipated.

Selection of Suitable Material(s):

In the first instance every effort should be made to use the same materials used in forming the original seal. In this way you are maintaining the seal as originally specified and in the case of repair one is simply restoring the original designed fire performance. Details of the materials used may often be found on signage adjacent to the seals or in the fire safety documentation for the building.

Where the supplier of the existing fire seal cannot be established the safest option is to remove the original seal in its entirety and replace it with a new seal of proven fire resistance performance when used in conjunction with the penetrating services in question.

It is recognised that there will be occasions when it is considered impractical for reasons of access or because of the size of the original seal to undertake a full replacement. For example, the seal may be a large loadbearing fire resistant compound/mortar seal in a service riser with a small area of damage or the need to cut out a new opening for a new service and then reinstate the fire resistance around the new service. In such circumstances and where the details of the original seal material(s) cannot be discovered a new seal material must be selected. In making such a selection it is assumed that the original seal is a) suitably fire resisting and b) in good condition:

1. Ensure that the selected product can provide the necessary fire resistance when used in the particular manner required and that there is supporting test/assessment evidence for such use. In the event of neither being available; assess the installation and/or employ the services of a qualified fire engineer experienced in the field of service penetrations.
2. Select a product which is suitable and compatible with the original fire seal.

3. Use a third party certificated specialist installer to carry out the work who is familiar with the principles and requirements of fire seal installation and who carries third party certification to that effect.
4. Make an easily accessible record of the repairs/modification(s) to the seal including full details of materials used and the supplier. This may prove valuable if additional repairs/modifications are required in the future.
5. It is advised that in order to satisfy Regulation 38 of the Building Regulations (England and Wales only) that a record be made of any changes made to the seal so that the essential fire safety information is available to the Responsible Person when a fire risk assessment is undertaken under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.