



Fire Service Inspectorate

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FIRE SERVICE
TECHNICAL COLLEGE LIBRARY

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14 July 1978

To all Chief Fire Officers

42756

Dear Chief Officer

HM PRISONS - SELF-LOCKING CELL DOORS

1. It has come to my attention that most of the cell doors in HM Prisons incorporate a self-locking device and it is conceivable that this arrangement could present a danger in operational conditions. For instance fire-fighters working in the dark or in smoke who were not informed about these doors could find themselves locked in a cell.

2. Although the self-locking mechanisms are not identical, a common arrangement is as follows:

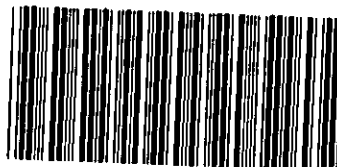
Part of the lock mechanism is a button which comes into contact with the door jamb when the door is closed. The bolt is then automatically tripped and enters the keep, thus locking the door. The button can be operated by hand when the door is open and the bolt is then released thus preventing the door being fully closed or locked. Self-locking devices are normally fitted only to cell doors and not to other security doors.

3. If there are any HM Prisons to which members of your brigade may be called to attend an incident you will no doubt wish to ensure that the particular self-locking cell door arrangements and the appropriate safety measures are known to them through the usual Section 1(i)(d) visits or other familiarisation or liaison arrangements.

Yours sincerely

No. 38/1978

The Fire Service
College



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