

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Managing the Risk from Finger Trapping in Doors and Gates

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Every site is different and each site may present hazards and risks that are not detailed here. It is a legal requirement that your risk assessment considers all foreseeable risks on your site, and not only the ones described here. The behaviour of children or vulnerable persons' is often unpredictable, so allow adequate safety margins wherever possible.

Remember professional help and advice is available.

- 1.2 Within this document any reference to finger trapping shall include, where relevant, the trapping of a finger(s), thumb(s), hand(s) or any combination thereof.

2.0 Who is this Guide for?

- 2.1 This guide is for Site Managers, Head Teachers and School Governors. It explains the steps you (Responsible Persons) should be taking to manage the risk of finger trapping on your site and the sources of help and advice available. Sites that may be affected by this issue include Schools and Nurseries, Leisure Centres, Theatres and Visitor Centres Day Centres, Parks and Play Grounds.

- 2.2 **In Schools:** Community and Voluntary controlled schools are expected to follow the guidance in this document as it clarifies how the Council's and school's legal responsibilities for health and safety will be met.

- 2.3 Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools may choose to follow this guidance as an example of good practice.

3.0 Why do you need to manage the risks from finger trapping?

- 3.1 Within the UK approximately 30,000 people trap and injure their fingers in doors each year. The vast majority of these are young persons, that is, children under 9. These children usually do not fully recognise the danger that gates and doors and in particular doorjamb's represent.

- 3.2 Injuries sustained as a result of finger trapping incidents in doors and gates often include compound fractures, serious lacerations and the amputation of digits. Even when the acute injuries are successfully treated, persons sometimes suffer long-term adverse effects including the increased likelihood of arthritis and/or loss of dexterity in later life; physical disabling effects, for example, loss of ability to play musical instruments; and psychological effects associated with deformed and/or missing fingers.

4.0 What are my Responsibilities?

- i. To undertake a risk assessment of finger trapping hazards on your site.
- ii. Implement measures to minimise the risk of injury from finger trapping.
- iii. Keep records of the significant findings of any risk assessment.

5.0 What help will the Council give?

- 5.1 The Council will provide advice and support in carrying out risk assessments and identifying ways to minimise the risk. In the first instance contact the Health and Safety Team for advice on 01443 425531.
- 5.2 **In Schools:** In Community and Voluntary Controlled schools the Council retains ultimate responsibility for health and safety in the school. In Aided and Foundation schools the Governing Body holds this responsibility.
- 5.3 Where major physical improvements are required to address identified high areas of risk the Council will consider these under the capital prioritisation process for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Foundation schools. In Aided schools the responsibility remains with the Governing Body or Diocese.

6.0 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 A systematic inspection of each door and gate must be carried out to determine the degree of risk and if any further action is required to eliminate or reduce the level of risk.
- 6.2 The risk assessment of doors and gates does not require any specialist knowledge or equipment. However, to be effective, the assessment will require the support and input of persons with knowledge of how the doors and gates are used, and therefore relevant staff should be consulted as part of the process.
- 6.3 Attached at section 10 is a form that should be used to record the findings of your risk assessment, together with a completed example.

The risk assessment will need to consider the following points:

- i. The individual design characteristics and position of the door/gate, including:
 - Whether (exposed) pinch points exist (e.g. doorjamb or leading edge)
 - The weight of the door/gate
 - The profile of the door/gate edges (e.g. some may have sharp edges)
 - Whether closure of the door/gate is managed in some way (e.g. rapid closure prevented by automatic closure device, door/gate secured in position at times when young children are near etc.)
 - Whether the door/gate could be slammed shut by the wind or another person.

- ii. The likelihood of young children or vulnerable persons being in a position to place their fingers in any pinch points that exist, which will be influenced by:
 - The position and use of the door/gate, including the frequency it is used by young children or vulnerable persons.
 - The likelihood that young children will congregate next to the door/gate, for instance while queuing for lunch etc.
 - The age and physical and mental abilities of the children or vulnerable persons.
 - Foreseeable behaviour and the level of supervision and control exercised over the children.
 - Any previous incidents.

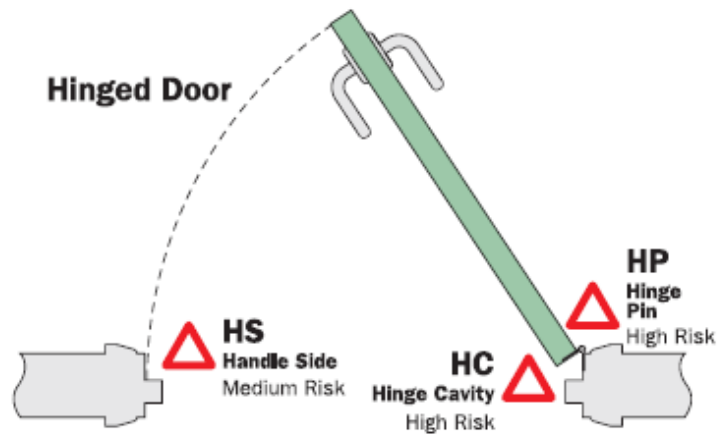
The following table details examples of doors and gates and their probable risk rating, the exact rating will only be determined from the site-specific assessment.

High Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilet and changing rooms in primary schools/nurseries and similar establishments. • Doors and gates in primary schools/nurseries and learning disability environments. Those environments regularly used by young children or vulnerable persons (e.g. classrooms, corridors and exits to playgrounds). • Gates in children’s playgrounds.
Medium Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilet and changing rooms in secondary schools, youth clubs or similar establishments. • Doors and gates in secondary schools regularly used by pupils (e.g. classrooms, corridors). • Doors and gates in nursery/primary schools only very occasionally used by young children (e.g. staff room, Head Teachers office, exits only used in an emergency).
Low Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boiler rooms, store rooms, all other doors and gates.

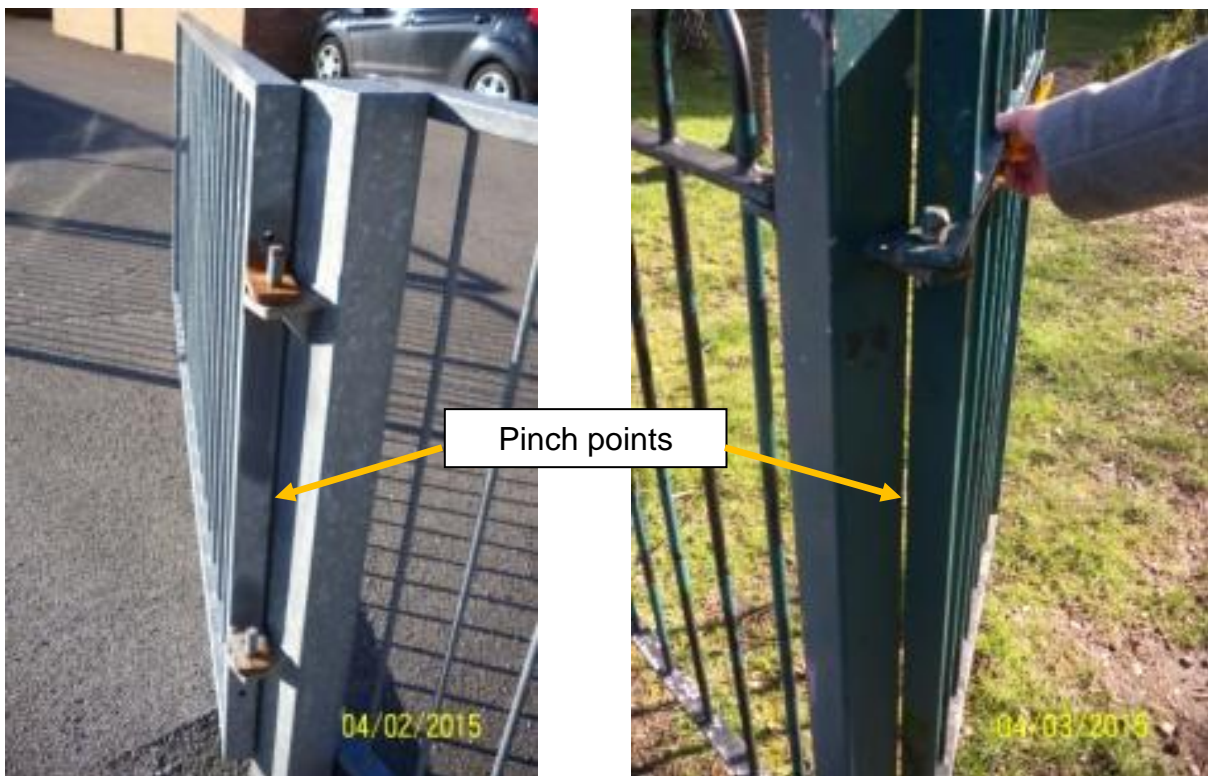
7.0 Possible Control Measures

- 7.1 Efforts should be made to completely avoid, by design, any pinch points presented by doors and gates, before consideration is given to guarding or other precautionary measures. This will be particularly relevant where new doors and gates are being specified or alterations are being made to existing doors and gates. For example, ‘anti-trap’ hinges can be used to avoid the pinch point between cubicle doors and the receiving wall; ***(these may need to be replaced hinges on gates should be designed so that the gate does not meet the gatepost, but leaves a gap between the gate and posts of at least 12mm.***
- 7.2 Where changing the design of a door, gate or the associated hinges is not practicable, and the door or gate still poses a high risk of injury, some form of guarding will be necessary, for example, finger guarding devices may be fitted retrospectively to doors that shroud the gap on the hinge side; opening-limiters can be fitted to gates that prevent them creating a pinch-point; gate stops may be inserted into the ground behind a gate to prevent the gate opening beyond 90 degrees (although the risk of injury from falling over or onto the stop must be considered).

7.3 Examples of finger trapping hazards on doors and gates

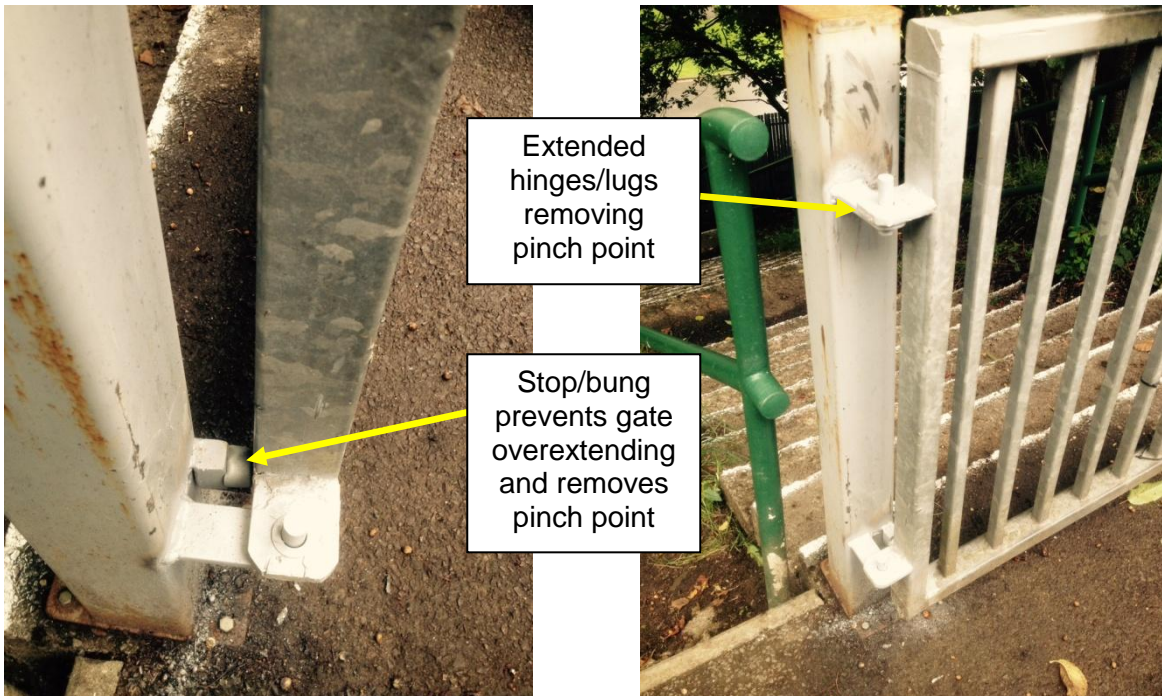


Pinch points identified on hinged doors



External gates with pinch points

7.4 Examples of Possible Finger Trapping Control Measures



Pinch points removed from gates by extending hinges and installing stops



Pinch points removed from existing doors by installing hinge guards or installing new doors with integrated hinge guards.

8.0 After the risk assessment is complete

After you have completed the risk assessment for your site you need to do several things:

- i. Make a written record of the key findings of your assessment (see section 10).
- ii. *For Schools* - Inform the Governing Body of the key findings and discuss ways to address the improvements identified.
- iii. Involve Council specialists where you need further advice.
- iv. Make arrangements to implement the required controls (e.g. fit finger guards to high risk doors).
- v. Periodically monitor any controls (e.g. replace any damaged finger guards) and;
- vi. Review at least annually and/or as necessary if there is a change in circumstances (e.g. installation of new or replacement gates/doors or change in use)

9.0 Further Information and Guidance

Premises and Facilities	Education and Lifelong Learning Valleys Innovation Centre, Navigation Park, Abercynon Tel. 01443 744444
Health and Safety	Health and Safety Team Ty Elai, Dinas Isaf Industrial Estate, Williamstown Tel. 01443 425531

10. Example Risk Assessment

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Record of Risk Assessment Findings

Site:	ABC School	Door/Gate Assessor	A. N. Other	Contact Tel No:	
Date of Assessment:	10 th May 2015	Designation	Headteacher	Contact Fax No:	

Door/Gate No.	Location/Room	Risk Rating			Improved risk control measure required (& comments)	Target Date for Action
		High	Med	Low		
1.	Main Entrance Gate	✓			Fit gate stop to prevent gate meeting with gate post	10th June 2015
2.	Main Entrance Door			✓	No pinch points	
3.	Boys Toilet Entrance	✓			Finger Guard needed	10th June 2015
4.	Boys Toilet Cubicle			✓	Lightweight doors (x4) with no pinch points	
5.	Girls Toilet Entrance	✓			Finger Guard needed	10th June 2015
6.	Girls Toilet Cubicle			✓	Lightweight doors (x4) with no pinch points	
7.	Headteacher's Office		✓		Not often used by pupils unattended – consider finger guard	September 2016
8.	Staff Room		✓		Not often used by unsupervised pupils –consider finger guard	September 2016
9.	Main Corridor			✓	Held open by magnetic switch - only closes in event of fire	
10.	Corridor outside canteen	✓			Finger guard needed	3 rd September 2015
11.	Fire Exit-Main Hall		✓		Only used in emergencies – consider finger guard	September 2016
12.	Gate to nursery yard	✓			Fit hinge extenders to remove pinch point - supervise closely in interim	10th June 2015
13.	Door to play house	✓			Remove door	10th May 2015

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