



# Crying

# SHAME

Would you knowingly expose a child to being maimed in such a way as to cause disfigurement or even permanent disability? The answer is no, of course not! But that is exactly what is happening every day in schools, hotels, restaurants and a host of other buildings where children are welcomed and all because of unprotected doors.

It's a crying shame that many architects fail to understand that trapped fingers in a door result in far more than a nasty pinch. It often results in disfigurement or even amputation resulting in permanent disability.

New research shows that doors injure at least 50,000 people every year. These are the serious ones that need hospital treatment. Around 50% of these need follow-up specialist treatment. We estimate the real number of accidents to be many times this!

These shocking figures are needlessly fuelled by the ambiguity of health and safety regulations and no policing by the authorities.



We apologise if this photograph offends but awareness of the severity of injury is important!

David Evans (FRCS), Medical Director and Consultant Hand Surgeon at the London Hand Clinic treats many finger injuries caused by doors. He wants to promote awareness of this common problem.

Health and safety regulations state that doors and gates must be fitted with the necessary safety devices. However, without real government intervention and manpower to police the regulations those at fault will continue to use insurers to foot the bill. Besides, the "get out of jail card" is that enforcement of this regulation depends on the availability of what is deemed a "practicable" device.

If no such device exists, then those charged with the safety of children can be exempt from the charge of criminal negligence by having failed to adequately protect them from serious harm.

In any subsequent compensation claim, most lawyers do not bother pursuing negligence via health & safety regulations because they are unaware that there is a suitable safety device on the market. Instead they seek prosecutions under a "duty of care" obligation. In an increasingly litigious society, the 'no win, no fee' litigation specialists are having a field day, chasing compensation claims on behalf of victims. With the prospect of substantial litigation costs on top of compensation, which for a child could be as high as £50,000 per finger damaged/lost.

However, all of this can be avoided from the beginning. All it takes is for those responsible for safety to be aware of the danger

and take action. Architects working within the public access sectors, especially in education, have within their grasp the chance to reduce the risk at grass roots level, merely by specifying 'practicable' door safety provision.

Unfortunately they are often hampered by restrictive project boundaries, resulting in 'watered down' safety measures, narrow budgets, and lack of knowledge surrounding the mechanics of available systems. For example, door safety protection based on roller blinds and others employing dubious mechanics and fixing techniques, can implode and so allow a child's finger to become trapped in a door.

What's more, architects often feel obliged to concentrate on the 'job in hand' and so feel unable to recommend measures to alleviate risk on an existing build. Therefore doors 'in situ' that pose a risk, remain unprotected. But the advent of a device called Finger Protector® has rewritten the rule book.

Steve Webb, founder of Safety Assured Accident Prevention and a father, who suffered the horror of seeing his daughter's fingers trapped in a door, invented the unique device. He set out to make Finger Protector® an inexpensive but effective solution, fitted in minutes without specialist tools which did the job year after year on virtually any type of door with little or no need for maintenance.

The value of door protection has been recognised by market leaders such as Tesco stores and the McDonalds restaurant chain who have bestowed preferred supplier status on Finger Protector® for the past five years. And as TGI Friday discovered, fitting Finger Protector® has not only completely eliminated the risk of trapped fingers over the past six years, it has also won them great PR too because it clearly demonstrates the company's corporate responsibility to the children who visit their restaurants.

Steve Webb has found everything from good practice to misunderstanding and ignorance of

the risks amongst the architectural profession. "I know of an architect who will specify Finger Protector® on pivot door hinges, but not for butt hinges. What he fails to understand is that although pivot hinged doors can crush fingers, butt hinged doors can actually amputate them very easily because of the guillotine effect which exerts up to 32,000 lbs of pressure.

"Equally, finger protection is usually specified for automatic doors or ones with closers, but all accessible doors should be considered a serious enough risk. Why knowingly condemn a child to a lifetime of disfigurement or disability when you can prevent it?"

A good question! We should remember that the architectural profession has a duty to take the responsible lead in this area and so protect our children's futures. It isn't just a crying shame that so many children suffer disfigurement or disability from door trapping – many parents like me consider it downright criminal.

The good news is there is an answer. It's unique, it's Finger Protector® – not to be confused with products of similar sounding names. For a free product sample and evaluation contact the number below.



**Finger Protector® is available from Safety Assured Limited. Call 01708 855 777**