The Foothill Rehab Center is a juvenile correctional facility where patients suffering from health and psychiatric problems are monitored and examined.

The 53,000 square foot facility, which houses 208 patients under lock and key, used a considerable number of fire-rated access doors, which, due to security reasons, were all supplied with locks.

Access doors are used to give maintenance personnel access into finished walls, ceilings and sometimes even floors. Plumbing valves, electrical wiring and equipment, and air conditioning ducts are the primary applications. The fire-rated access door is installed to maintain the integrity of the fire-rated wall or ceiling system penetrated by the utility lines and related equipment.

There are two types of fire-rated access panels on the market today: insulated and uninsulated.

For walls, insulated doors are rated by Underwriters Laboratories (UL), with a 1 1/2-hour, class B rating, maximum temperature rise of 250 degrees in 30 minutes. For ceilings, insulated doors carry a Warnock Hersey three hour non-combustible and a 1-hour combustible rating.

Currently, uninsulated doors are only used for wall applications. They have the 1 1/2-hour fire rating from UL and meet the ANSI-UL 10B standard; however, they do not carry the temperature rise rating that insulated access doors have.

Both types of fire-rated access doors require a self-locking mechanism which prevents anyone from leaving the door in an opened position. An open access door creates a pathway for heat, smoke and flame, so access doors must be kept closed in order to maintain the integrity of the fire-rated assembly.

Contractors should take care to use the proper door for the installation. Replacing the doors after installation is an expensive and time-consuming mistake to correct. When a contractor is not sure what type of access door to use, he should contact an access door manufacturer for clarification.

Fire-Resistant Access Doors

Fire resistant access doors are not fire-rated. Fire resistant doors have a pan-style face which will accommodate dual layered fire-rated gypsum board. The combination of steel and fire-rated tile or gypsum board maintains the fire resistant quality of the ceiling assembly.

Some manufacturers offer special recessed panels designed to accommodate the ceiling tile or wallboard. This type of access panel provides an extremely attractive appearance since they become almost “invisible” when finished.

Access Doors:
Fire Rated and Fire Resistant