

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CAVITY BARRIER AND A CAVITY CLOSER

In modern façade and cavity wall construction, fire safety and moisture control are both essential. Yet many professionals still confuse two critical components: **cavity barriers** and **cavity closers**.

Although their names sound similar, their functions are fundamentally different. Choosing the correct solution is vital for building safety, regulatory compliance, and long-term façade performance.

What Is a Cavity Barrier?

A **cavity barrier** is a fire safety product specifically designed to prevent the spread of flames and smoke through concealed cavities within a building.

Ventilated façades and cavity wall systems naturally create hidden voids that can act like chimneys during a fire. Without proper compartmentation, fire can spread rapidly from one part of the building to another.

Cavity barriers solve this problem by sealing the cavity when exposed to high temperatures.

How Cavity Barriers Work

Most cavity barriers contain **intumescent materials** that expand dramatically in the event of a fire. As temperatures rise, the material swells and closes the cavity gap, blocking the movement of:

- Flames
- Hot gases
- Smoke

This significantly slows down fire propagation and helps protect adjacent compartments and escape routes.

Why Cavity Barriers Matter

Installing certified cavity barriers helps:

- Improve façade fire safety
- Meet building regulations and fire codes
- Reduce the risk of rapid vertical fire spread
- Protect occupants and property
- Increase overall building resilience

In today's high-performance building envelopes, cavity barriers are an indispensable element of passive fire protection.

What Is a Cavity Closer?

A cavity closer serves a completely different purpose.

Rather than providing fire resistance, cavity closers are primarily used to:

- Seal openings around doors and windows
- Reduce thermal bridging
- Improve insulation performance
- Prevent moisture penetration
- Block drafts and exterior water vapor

A cavity closer generally consists of an insulated trim or closing profile that finishes the cavity neatly around openings.

The Key Difference

The simplest way to understand the distinction is this:

Cavity Barrier

Designed for fire protection

Stops fire and smoke spread

Contains intumescent fire-reactive material

Used for passive fire compartmentation

Cavity Closer

Designed for insulation and moisture control

Prevents dampness and thermal loss

Typically non-fire-resistant

Used around doors and windows

Why the Difference Is Critical

Confusing a cavity closer with a cavity barrier can lead to serious fire safety risks.

A standard cavity closer is **not intended to stop fire spread**. While it may improve thermal and moisture performance, it cannot replace a certified fire-rated cavity barrier in a ventilated façade or cavity wall system.

For complete façade performance, modern buildings often require both:

- **Cavity barriers** for fire protection
- **Cavity closers** for insulation and moisture management

Build Safer, Smarter Façades

As façade systems become more advanced, the demand for integrated fire-safe solutions continues to grow. Understanding the role of each component is essential for architects, façade engineers, contractors, and developers.

Selecting the correct cavity protection products not only improves compliance — it enhances safety, durability, and peace of mind for the entire building lifecycle.

When it comes to façade design, the right solution makes all the difference.