



## From MBA USA

### A newsletter for GSA Certified Safe and Vault Technicians and GSA Approved Inspectors.

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I would like to begin this newsletter with a sort of explanation / apology. The last newsletter was scheduled to be sent at a certain time. When I checked, it appeared to not have been sent. So I sent it manually. It was too late when I realized that I had actually sent it twice. Then three days later it got sent twice again. So that is why you may have received it up to four times. Believe me, I do not intend to stuff anyone's inbox with garbage, so I do apologize for that. Hopefully my learning curve has straightened out a bit.

Also, this newsletter is not new news. It's sort of 18 year old news. But it is

a subject that can be a bit confusing, so I will do my best to explain the differences in GSA vault doors.

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## **GSA Approved Vault Doors**

GSA approved vault doors have been around since the mid 1960's. Interim Federal Specification AA-D-00600 is dated December 27, 1963 and listed only class 5 for vault doors. It was replaced by Interim Federal Specification AA-D-00600a on May 10, 1966 which listed class 5 and class 6 (interestingly, the "a" revision allowed for vault doors to have, or not have, an escape device, but that's another story). Both classes 5 and 6 were included in the "B" (March 26, 1969) and "C" (December 1, 1990) revisions.

On May 15, 2000 Federal Specification AA-D-600D superseded AA-D-00600C and some significant changes in door classes were made. I'm saying significant changes because that is what the intent was. In reality, the indented changes either had already happened or happened slowly. The "D" revision dropped class 6 for GSA vault doors and changed class 5 into class 5-V (security Vault door). It added classes 5-A (Armory vault door) and 5-B (Ballistic resistant security vault door). In addition, measurements went from inches, pounds and ounces to metric. In doing research for the book, *GSA Container Identification*, I found that class 6 vault doors had not been manufactured since the "black label" days (prior to October 1, 1990). Also, ballistic resistant vault doors had been offered prior the "D" revision. Ballistic resistance, by the way, is a requirement for the Department of State.

I have often wondered when the GSA vault door manufacturers began labeling their doors as class 5-V, 5-A, or 5-B instead of class 5. It isn't likely that they began on May 15, 2000 when the "D" revision was released. Recently I contacted my colleague and friend, Mr. Vaughan Armstrong, regarding this question. Vaughan is retired now, but he worked for many years at the DoD Lock Program, was very active on the IACSE-SEALS Subcommittee and is the quintessential subject matter expert when it comes to GSA approved security equipment.

Vaughan's response to my question provided some insight into the

progression of Revision “D” and its amendments. He felt that AA-D-600D was long overdue, but omitted some important things. The GSA approval label for all three classes of doors had the same wording. That means Armory Vault Doors were still labeled as Security Vault Doors. It also had some typographical errors that could cause confusion. Amendments 1 (3/19/2001), 2 (4/20/2007), and 3 (11/1/2009) did not correct any of these. It was not until Amendment 4 (1/5/2010) that the different wording for the class 5-A armory vault door's GSA label was included and the confusing typos were fixed.

I do not have a copy of all of the Qualified Products Lists (QPL's) for AA-D-600, but the ones I have fueled my curiosity on the question of “when did the manufacturers begin labeling vault doors as classes 5-V, 5-A and 5-B instead of class 5?” QPL-AA-D-600-8 is dated May 20, 2008. This is eight years after AA-D-600D and it refers only to class 5. It was not until QPL-AA-D-600-9, dated November 20, 2012 that the classes were listed as 5-A, 5-B and 5-V. QPL's are not gospel though. They can be a source of information and equally a source of misinformation. I would assume the manufacturers were made aware of the differences in these classes in some way or another.

To sum it all up, here is what Vaughan told me in his own words:

“So you (and your students) might well find doors in the field that are GSA-labeled as "Security" but in terms of their lock, and perhaps their certification label, are "Armory." For nearly ten years the vault door manufacturers didn't know any better than what the spec said.”

Proper identification of a GSA container or vault door is an important subject. The proper class, usage and configuration can make the difference in a facility being in or out of compliance with their own rules and regulations.

While I'm on the subject of vault doors, I'll mention that some of the manufacturers have made doors that are not GSA approved because they were made a custom size not included in AA-D-600. They will appear to be of the same design and construction otherwise, but because of their custom size, they do not have GSA approval labels and cannot be recertified as GSA approved vault doors. GSA approved vault doors come

in two sizes only. A single leaf door will be in the neighborhood of 78" high and 40" wide. A double leaf door will be the same height and twice as wide as a single door. Again, identification is important.

After reading this, you may be thinking it's all as clear as mud. But do your best, as always.

Regards,

**Andy Dennison, CMST, CML**

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