

Excessive clearances between access covers and frames have become commonplace across the UK market — but at Thomas Dudley Utility Products, we believe this should never be accepted as "normal".

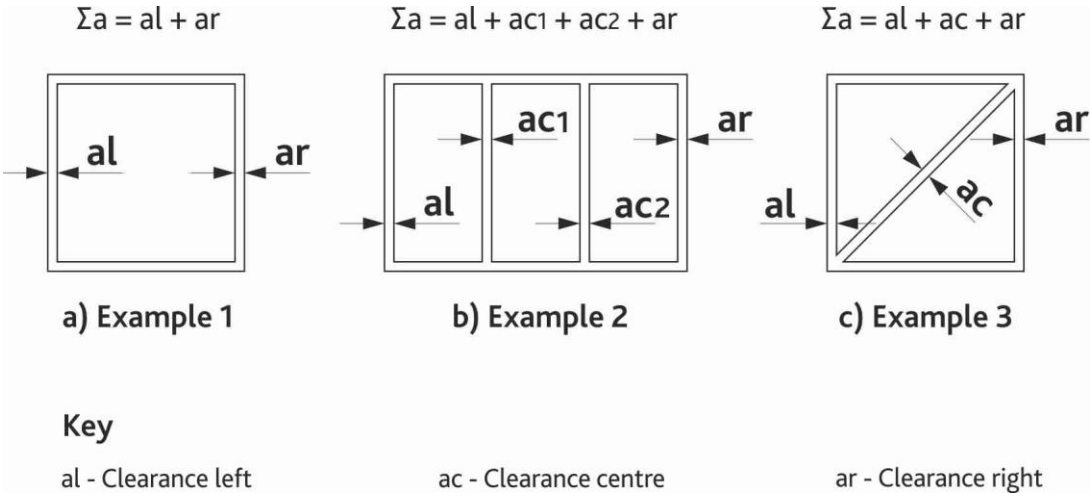
Clearances directly influence the stability, service life and performance of every installed access cover. When those gaps are too large, systems are more likely to move, wear and ultimately fail. That's why meeting the requirements of **EN124** is essential — and why we go further.

Understanding EN124 Mandatory Clearance Requirements

EN124 defines the maximum *total clearance* (Σa) permitted between a cover and its frame. This clearance is critical because it governs the potential for horizontal displacement during service.

According to **EN124 – Section 6.4**:

- **Clear opening ≤ 400 mm:** total clearance **Σa ≤ 7 mm**
- **Clear opening > 400 mm:** total clearance **Σa ≤ 9 mm**



Each clearance is to be measured at the point where the gap is greatest along each individual edge.

These limits exist to prevent excessive movement and the damage it can cause. Unfortunately, many products available in the UK today approach—or even exceed—these thresholds.

The Problems Caused by Excessive Gaps

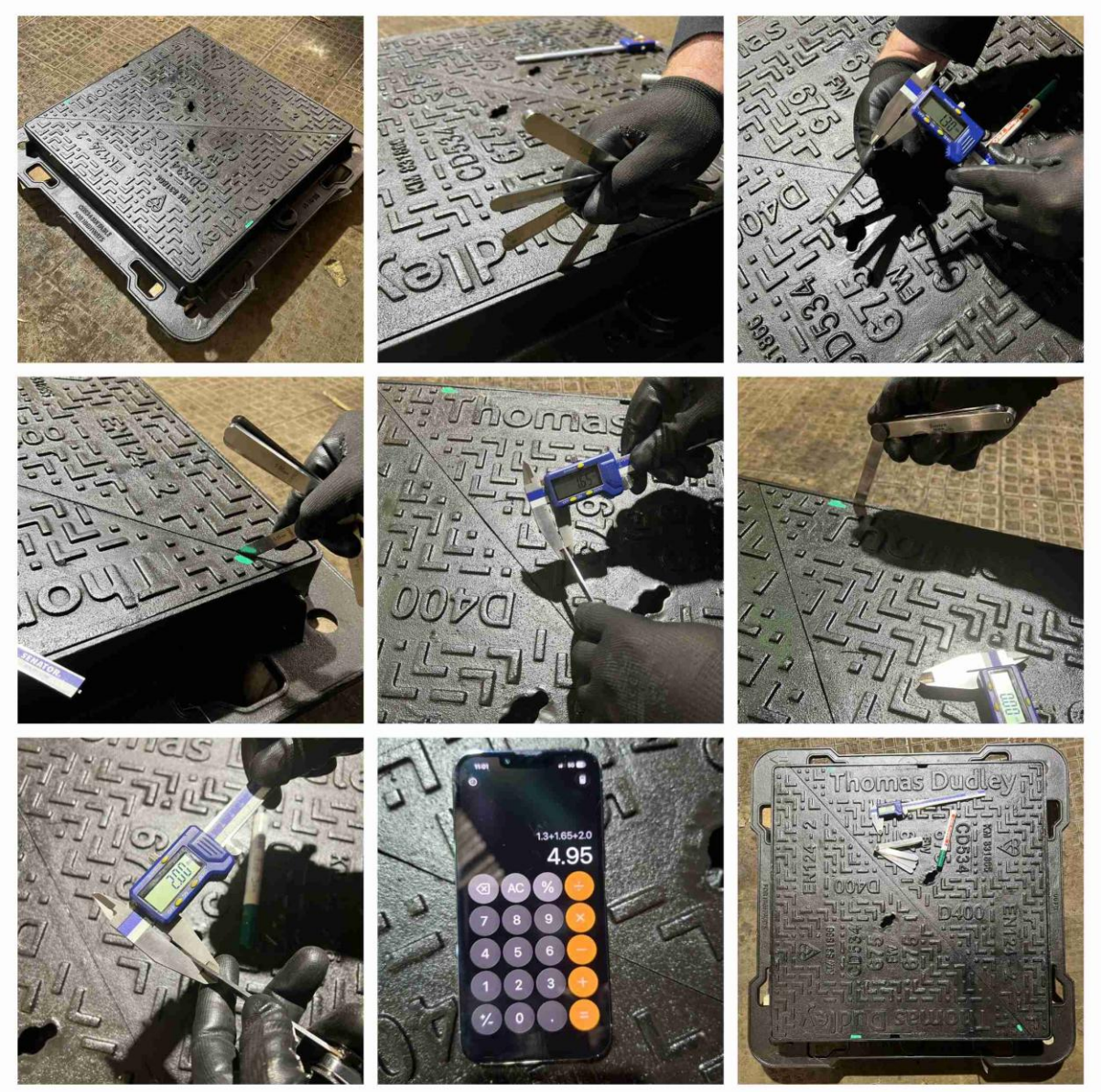
Oversized gaps between the cover and frame can lead to a range of performance issues:

- **Increased movement** of the cover within the frame
- **Accelerated wear** of seating faces
- **Unstable or rocking covers** during traffic loading
- **Covers dropping into the frame**
- **Premature product failure** and reduced service life

These issues create additional cost, safety concerns and avoidable maintenance for asset owners and contractors.

The Thomas Dudley Difference

At Thomas Dudley, we have always believed that conformity with EN124 is the minimum standard—*not the goal*. Through tight production control and precision engineering, we actively seek and consistently achieve clearances **smaller than the maximum limits specified** in EN124.



This precision is possible thanks to:

- Over **100 years of foundry and metallurgy expertise**, unique among UK suppliers
- Close collaboration with our long-standing manufacturing partner
- Rigorous quality control throughout every stage of production
- Knowledge and processes built over generations to ensure consistency and reliability

Our heritage in castings and material science enables us to maintain tighter tolerances than many competitors, delivering products that perform better for longer.

Why It Matters for You

Choosing access covers and frames with controlled, minimal clearances means:

- Longer service life
- Reduced maintenance
- Stable, secure installations
- Lower whole-life cost
- Confidence that every product exceeds the performance expected by the standard

When you specify Thomas Dudley products, you're choosing a level of expertise and control that's simply not available elsewhere in the UK market.

Thomas Dudley Utility Products
Engineered for performance. Driven by expertise