



Commercial Buildings Frequently Asked Questions

SPS 361.03(13), SPS 314.001(1), NFPA 1 s. 14.4.1, IBC s.1008.1.9 Are door security or barricade devices, that are separate devices from the typical door hardware and latching mechanism, permitted to be used to secure doors in public buildings and places of employment, particularly classrooms in educational occupancies, during lockdown events?

Answer: No.

While there are many innovative devices currently on the market for securing doors, if they operate independently of the typical door hardware and latch, they are likely not permitted by Wisconsin Building and Fire Codes. SPS 361.03(13) requires existing public buildings and places of employment to be maintained in compliance with the building code provisions that applied when the building was constructed or altered except when required by subsequent editions of the building code. The building code has a long history of consistent requirements for exit or exit access door hardware. For example, the 1970 Wisconsin Commercial Building Code contained the following requirement in s. 51.15(3) for door hardware. "A standard exit door shall have such fastenings or hardware that it can be opened from the inside without using a key, by pushing against a single bar or plate, or turning a single knob or handle. It shall not be barred or bolted at any time while the building is occupied." The current Wisconsin Commercial Building Code which adopts the 2009 edition of the International Building Code requires the following in s. 1008.1.9.5, "The unlatching of any door or leaf shall not require more than one operation." and in s. 1008.1.9, "Except as specifically permitted by this section egress doors shall be readily openable from the egress side without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort." The Wisconsin Fire Prevention Code, SPS 314, contains requirements for the operation, maintenance, and use of public buildings and places of employment. SPS 314.001(1) adopts the National Fire Protection Association, NFPA 1, Fire Code 2012 edition. NFPA 1 s. 14.4.1 requires "Means of egress shall be continuously maintained free of all obstructions or impediments to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency." There are many unintended consequences that might occur from barricading egress doors serving occupied rooms and therefore such devices are generally prohibited by Wisconsin Building and Fire Prevention Codes. There are code compliant door hardware solutions, such as a classroom security lockset, that will allow egress doors to be locked from the classroom side, while at the same time allowing egress through normal operation of the door hardware on the classroom side, which will automatically release the latch and any accompanying dead bolt in a single operation.