



Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services

Fire Prevention/Health and Safety

Door Locks- Educational Occupancies

The Department of Safety and Professional Services Fire Prevention and Commercial Building Inspection teams regularly receive inquiries regarding school safety and door locks, barricades, and specialized aftermarket hardware. Each inquiry receives specific review related to the details provided and applicable codes. The Department has previously provided a FAQ response to this. The Department's interpretation of the current adopted and referenced code requirements has not changed, however reviews of inquiries are ongoing as technology continues to evolve and each inquiry is unique.

<https://dsps.wi.gov/Documents/Programs/CommercialBuildings/FAQSecurityLocksSchools.pdf>

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.

Additional questions regarding SPS 314, NFPA 1, and NFPA 101 requirements, please contact your [Fire Prevention/Health and Safety Coordinator](#). You can also visit the [DPS Fire Department Fire Prevention Website](#) for more information and resources.

Current Code References:

IBC 2015- 1010.1.9 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.

IBC 2015- 1010.1.9.5 The unlatching of any door or leaf shall not require more than one operation. Exceptions: Places of detention or restraint, where manually operated bolt locks are permitted, doors with automatic flush bolts, and doors from individual dwelling and sleeping units in Group R occupancies as permitted.

NFPA 1, 2012- 14.5.2.1 Door leaves shall be arranged to be opened readily from the egress side whenever the building is occupied. [101:7.2.1.5.1]

NFPA 1, 2012- 14.5.2.3 Locks, if provided, shall not require the use of a key, a tool, or special knowledge or effort for operation from the egress side. [101:7.2.1.5.3]

Resources and information:

[Wisconsin Department of Justice School Security Framework](#) (Pages 24-25)

[NFPA Journal - In Compliance NFPA 101, May June 2018](#)

[NFPA School Safety and Security](#)

Code compliant door locking options referenced in newer versions of NFPA 101 code must ensure:

- Unlocking and unlatching from the egress side does not require the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge.
- The locking means are capable of being engaged without opening the door.
- The releasing mechanism for unlocking or unlatching is at a height between 34" and 48".
- Locks if remotely engaged are capable of being unlocked without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge.
- The door is capable of being unlocked and opened from outside the room with the necessary key or credential.
- The locking means does not modify the door closer, panic hardware, or fire exit hardware, or impair their function.
- Modifications to fire door assemblies and hardware follow NFPA 80
- Staff have training in the engagement of the mechanisms from both sides of the door and the emergency action plan addresses the locking and unlocking use of the mechanisms.

NFPA Approved Door Locks:



Option #1- Interconnected Lock/Latch for new installs or retrofit

Option #2- Thumb turn lock retrofit

(NFPA, 2021)

References:

National Fire Protection Association (2021). School Safety and Security.

<https://www.nfpa.org//media/Files/Code%20or%20topic%20fact%20sheets/SchoolSafetyUpdate.ashx#:~:text=The%20lock%20must%20be%20installed,above%20the%20floor.&text=The%20door%20must%20have%20the,the%20necessary%20key%20or%20credential.&text=The%20staff%20must%20be%20drilled%20in%20the%20engagement%20and%20release%20of%20locks.>

NFPA 1: Fire Code, 2012 Edition. In NFPA National Fire Codes Online. Retrieved from <http://codesonline.nfpa.org>

NFPA 101: Life Safety Code, 2018 Edition. In NFPA National Fire Codes Online. Retrieved from <http://codesonline.nfpa.org>

IBC 2015: International Building Code, 2015 Edition. In IBC Codes Online. Retrieved from

<https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IBC2015P4>