

Door Locking Mechanism



As a best practice, the School Safety Preparedness Task Force recommends securing all interior doors with a door locking mechanism such that the door can be locked from both sides and unlocked from inside without a key, tool, or special knowledge.

Why?

- Physical access to classrooms can put staff and students at risk from intruders. By providing a locking mechanism inside the classroom, teachers or others don't have to leave the room to secure their space. During the Virginia Tech shootings, students were attacked in their classrooms. The doors to the classrooms were not locked and continued to remain open after the assailant started shooting. He then returned to these classrooms for a second round of shootings.
- As we learned from the Columbine High School shooting, the shooters did not gain access to locked classrooms.
- A best practice is to have all classroom doors locked. Unfortunately, this may not always be realistic for day-to-day operations. Ensuring school staff can quickly lock classroom doors from the inside without using a physical key is another security measure that does not interfere with learning.

Operational Considerations

Recognizing the cost and time necessary to achieve compliance with a safer code compliant locking mechanism, the school districts need to work with their local fire and police departments and the State Fire Marshal's Office to develop an interim action plan and a proposed corrective action plan to install the code compliant locking solutions.

When necessary, exceptions or variances to the NH State Fire Code may be granted on a case by case basis by the State Fire Marshal in accordance with Saf-C 6005.

[Fire Code Variance Requests | NH Division of Fire Safety](#)

Consideration should be given to an Adopt-a-Door program to help with potential funding for lock upgrades.

Door Locking Mechanism Implementation



The Life Safety Code (NFPA 101, 2018 edition) provides provisions for access to structures and areas. Classroom doors shall be permitted to be locked to prevent unwanted entry, provided that the locking means is approved and all of the following conditions of are met.

Compliance Guidelines

1. The locking means shall be capable of being engaged without opening the door.
2. The unlocking and unlatching from the classroom side of the door can be accomplished without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or effort.
3. Two non-simultaneous releasing operations shall be permitted for existing conditions.
4. The releasing mechanism for unlocking and unlatching shall be located at a height not less than 34 in. (865 mm) and not exceeding 48 in. (1220 mm) above the finished floor.
5. Locks, if remotely engaged, shall be unlockable from the classroom side of the door without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or effort.
6. The door shall be capable of being unlocked and opened from outside the room with the necessary key or other credential.
7. The locking means shall not modify the door closer, panic hardware, or fire exit hardware.
8. Modifications to fire door assemblies, including door hardware, shall be in accordance with NFPA 80.
9. The emergency action plan shall address the use of the locking and unlocking means from within and outside the room.
10. Staff shall be drilled in the engagement and release of the locking means, from within and outside the room, as part of the emergency egress drills.

Governance

RSA 153:1

VI-a. "New Hampshire fire code" or "state fire code" means the adoption by reference of the Life Safety Code, 2018 edition, and the Uniform Fire Code NFPA 1, 2018 edition, as published by the National Fire Protection Association and as amended by the state board of fire control and ratified by the general court pursuant to RSA 153:5. The provisions of any other national code, model code, or standard referred to within a code listed in this definition shall be included in the state fire code unless amended in accordance with RSA 153:5 and Saf-FMO 300

NFPA 101 (2018 edition) Section 1.4 Equivalency.

Nothing in this Code is intended to prevent the use of systems, methods, or devices of equivalent or superior quality, strength, fire resistance, effectiveness, durability, and safety over those prescribed by this Code.

NFPA 101 (2018 edition) Section 14/15.2.2.2.4

Classroom Door Locking to
Prevent Unwanted Entry.

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For more information about this recommendation, please contact:

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