

Security and barricade devices on Classroom Doors

Background

The Montana State adopted International Fire Code and International Building Code both require egress doors to be immediately operable without use of a key, without special knowledge or effort, and to release with a single operation. The use of door security and barricade devices that do not comply with these basic requirements are prohibited.

Classroom doors are required to meet Federal accessibility laws and fire and building code requirements which include the ability to operate door hardware with no tight grasping, tight pinching, or twisting of the wrist; door operating hardware must be located between 34" and 48" above the floor. Federal accessibility laws and building codes require the bottom 10" of the push side of the door to be a smooth surface.

The following are code requirements from the state adopted 2012 edition of International Fire Code.

- **[B] 1008.1.9 Door operations.** 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.
- **[B] 1008.1.9.5 Unlatching.** The unlatching of any door or leaf shall not require more than one operation.
- **[B] 1008.1.9.2 Hardware height.** Door handles, pulls, latches, locks and other operating devices shall be installed 34 inches (864 mm)

Rationale against the use of door security and barricade devices

Many door security devices, once employed, do not allow for quick and unimpeded egress. There may be circumstances during a lockdown emergency where it will be necessary to quickly exit the classroom or building, including:

- Fire set by an assailant
- Explosive devices detonated by an assailant
- Gas leak initiated by an assailant
- Hazardous/toxic material introduced by an assailant
- An assailant entering or firing a weapon through an exterior window

Additionally, if a teacher or staff member were to become incapacitated for any reason, the children (especially the younger ones) may be incapable of removing the security device. This not only would prevent the occupants from exiting the room, but would also prevent timely access by emergency personnel.

Another major concern is the potential for a door security device to be used by a student, staff member or intruder for the purpose of committing an assault or other serious crimes. Most door security and barricade devices would prevent school staff, law enforcement and other emergency responders from entering the classroom, creating an unintended safety hazard and liability risk for the district. Conversely, a code-compliant classroom security lockset allows staff or emergency personnel the ability to quickly unlock a classroom door from the outside by use of a key.

Below are some of the noncompliant aftermarket locking devices found on classroom doors in Montana recently.

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