

LOCKING ARRANGEMENTS

For Residential Care or Assisted Living Facilities

Outside of the healthcare setting, locks on doors are utilized everywhere and we don't give it much of a thought. In the highly regulated industry of healthcare, we must be very vigilant and aware to what the codes and standards will and will not permit.

Locks on doors that are in the path of egress are greatly misunderstood and therefore are widely abused.

In accordance with Residential Care or Assisted Living Facilities in Idaho, IDAPA 16.03.22.405.07 states; any locks on exit doors must be single action and easily operable from the inside without the use of keys or any special knowledge. **Special Locking Arrangements** as permitted in Chapter 7 of the NFPA, Standard 101, Life Safety Code, 2000 Edition, can be used.

Ordinarily, you are not permitted to lock a door in the path of egress however, there are exceptions:

- Delayed egress locks
- Access-control locks
- Single Action

NFPA 101, Chapter 7.2.1.6, Special Locking Arrangements

Delayed Egress

Delayed egress locks are a lock when a person pushes on the horizontal crash bar of the locked door, a local buzzer will sound, and the door will automatically unlock within 15 seconds. This effectively allows a person to egress through the door, but just delays their egress, hence the name. The requirements for a delayed egress lock are:

- Delayed egress locks are only permitted in buildings which are fully protected with smoke detectors or automatic sprinklers
- The delayed egress locks must unlock upon activation of the sprinkler system or a heat detector or a smoke detector, and remain unlocked until manually reset. Notice that activation of a manual pull station is not required when unlocking a delayed egress lock.
- The delayed egress locks must unlock upon loss of power to the mechanism controlling the lock
- Upon 3 seconds of activating the releasing device (horizontal crash bar) a local buzzer must actuate (to alert staff someone is attempting to exit), and within 15 seconds of activating the releasing device, the lock shall automatically unlock. The locks must reset manually, not automatically.

- The code allows for the delayed egress lock to automatically unlock within 30 seconds if approved by the AHJ, but HFAP does not approve of this option.
- A sign, in 1 inch letters, must be posted on the door which reads:

PUSH UNTIL ALARM SOUNDS

DOOR CAN BE OPENED IN 15 SECONDS

[Code reference: 7.2.1.6.2, 2000 edition of the LSC]

Access Control

Access Control locks are the most misunderstood type of lock on their correct operation. An access control lock usually utilizes a magnetic lock (mag-lock) assembly, and is often integrated with the badge swipe reader to control access into a department. The requirements for an access control lock are:

- A motion sensor must be mounted on the egress side of the door, that will detect a person approaching and will automatically unlock the door in the direction of egress
- A loss of power to the device controlling power to the access control lock must unlock the doors in the direction of egress
- A manual release device must be mounted within 5 feet of the door, and between 40 to 48 inches above the floor which, when depressed, will automatically unlock the door in the direction of egress, and must be identified with a sign that reads:

PUSH TO EXIT

- When depressed, the “Push to Exit” button must directly interrupt power to the lock, independent of the access control system electronics, and the doors must remain unlocked for a minimum of 30 seconds
- Activation of the building sprinkler system or the building fire alarm system must unlock the door in the direction of egress

The most common deficiency with access control locks is the absence of the required motion sensor and/or the “Push to Exit” button on the egress side of the door. When properly installed, access control locks are not a lock for people trying to get out of the building, but they serve as a lock on doors for people trying to get into the area controlled by the lock. [Code reference: 7.2.1.6.2, 2000 edition of the LSC]

Single Action/Dead Bolt Locks

Generally speaking, dead bolt locks are not permitted on a door in the path of egress. The only exception would be a dead bolt lock which automatically retracts when the door handle is twisted but other than that, they are not allowed. The reason for this is the LSC only permits one releasing action to operate the door. So if a dead bolt lock is installed on a door in the path of egress and the lock is not part of the latch-set, then it would require two actions: one to unlock the dead bolt and another to turn the door handle, to operate the door.

A single action lock is a lock on the handle of the door that when the handle is operated (turned or rotated) the door unlocks and opens. [Code reference: 7.2.1.5.4, 2000 edition of the LSC]