

# Guide to Selecting Code Approved Door Latching Hardware for Exit Doors

**Front or main exit doors** may be equipped with key-operated locking devices, from the inside, provided that the device is readily distinguished as locked. In these occurrences, a readily visible and durable sign must be posted on or above the door, on the inside, stating: **THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHILE THE BUILDING IS OCCUPIED**. The sign must be in letters 1-inch high on a contrasting background. See below.



**Required secondary exit doors** from commercial business, mercantile, storage and factory occupancies are permitted to have approved locksets which will unlatch with only one operation. Self-releasing door hardware with interconnected single locking hardware are recommended where security concerns are desired or consider panic hardware assemblies. Independent door latches and deadbolt locksets are not permitted. See illustrations below.



Use **Self-releasing door hardware** with interconnected single locking hardware (above) or use **panic hardware** (below)

Vs.



Independent door latch and deadbolt locksets (not allowed)

OR



**Panic Hardware**

Even in low occupancy settings, emergency exit door locks must open to the outside in one simple motion without pinching or twisting the wrist. Emergency exit doors must allow people to leave the space quickly without using a key, tool, extra force or special knowledge (thumb bolt) to unlock the door, and, the unlatching of any door must not require more than one operation.

# Exit Door Operations & Hardware

Establishing and maintaining safe egress (exiting) for your employees and customers, under emergency conditions, is arguably the most important consideration for the safety of all occupants within your responsibility. Providing code compliant egress not only ensures their safety but also goes a long way in reducing liability if a fire or life safety emergency does occur. Below are a few common fire prevention egress issues which are required under the adopted fire code.

## Exit Door Hardware [IFC 1008.1.9.1]

Door handles, pulls, latches, locks and other operating devices on doors required to be **accessible** by Chapter 11 of the *International Building Code* shall not require tight grasping, tight pinching or twisting of the wrist to operate.

## Door Locks and Latches [IFC 1008.1.9.3]

**Locks and latches shall be permitted to prevent operation of doors where any of the following exists:**

In buildings for **Public Assembly** having an *occupant load* of **300 persons or less**, **Business, Factories, Mercantile (shops and stores), Storage facilities, and in Places of religious worship**, the **main exterior door or doors** are permitted to be equipped with key-operated locking devices from the egress side **provided:**

- The locking device is **readily distinguishable as locked**;
- A readily **visible durable sign** is posted on the egress side on or adjacent to the door stating: **THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHEN BUILDING IS OCCUPIED**. The sign shall be in **letters 1-inch** high on a contrasting background; and
- The use of the key-operated locking device is revocable by the *fire code official* for due cause.

Where **egress doors are used in pairs**, *approved* automatic flush bolts shall be permitted to be used, provided that the door leaf having the automatic flush bolts has **no doorknob** or surface-mounted hardware.

## Bolt locks [IFC 1008.1.9.4]

**Manually operated flush bolts or surface bolts are not permitted.**

### Exceptions:

- Where a **pair of doors** serves a storage or equipment room, manually operated edge- or surface-mounted bolts are permitted on the **inactive leaf**.
- Where a **pair of doors** serves an *occupant load* of **less than 50 persons** in a **Group B, F or S** occupancy, manually operated edge- or surface-mounted bolts are permitted on the **inactive leaf**. The inactive leaf shall contain no doorknobs, panic bars or similar operating hardware.
- Where a **pair of doors** serves a **Group B, F or S** occupancy, manually operated edge- or surface-mounted bolts are permitted on the **inactive leaf** provided such inactive leaf is not needed to meet egress width requirements and the building is equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* in accordance with [Section 903.3.1.1](#). The inactive leaf shall contain no doorknobs, panic bars or similar operating hardware.

## Unlatching [IFC 1008.1.9.5]

**The unlatching of any door or leaf shall not require more than one operation.**

### Exceptions:

- Where manually operated bolt locks are permitted by [Section 1008.1.9.4](#).
- Doors with automatic flush bolts as permitted by [Section 1008.1.9.3](#), Exception 3.

