

## EXIT DOOR TO OPEN WITHOUT A KEY OR ANY SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OR EFFORT

### CODE SECTIONS

International Fire Code 2006 Edition

**1008.1.8.3 Locks and latches.** Locks and latches shall be permitted to prevent operation of doors where any of the following exists:

1. Places of detention or restraint.
2. In buildings in occupancy Group A having an occupant load of 300 or less, Groups B, F, M and S. and in churches, the main exterior door or doors are permitted to be equipped with key-operated locking devices from the egress side provided:
  - 2.1. The locking device is readily distinguishable as locked,
  - 2.2. 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 (25mm) high on a contrasting background,
  - 2.3. The use of the key-operated locking device is revocable by the fire code official for due cause.
3. 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.

**1008.1.8.4 Bolt locks.** Manually operated flush bolts or surface bolts are not permitted.

**Exceptions:**

1. On doors not required for egress in individual dwelling units or sleeping units.
2. Where a pair of doors serves a storage or equipment room, manually operated edge- or surface mounted bolts are permitted on the inactive leaf.

**1008.1.8.6 Delayed egress locks.** Approved, listed, delayed egress locks shall be permitted to be installed on doors serving any occupancy except Group A, E and H Occupancies in buildings that are equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3. 1.1 or an approved automatic smoke or heat detection system installed in accordance with Section 907, provided that the doors unlock in accordance with Items 1 through 6 below. A building occupant shall not be required to pass through more than one door equipped with a delayed egress lock before entering an exit.

1. The doors unlock upon actuation of the automatic sprinkler system or automatic fire detection system.
2. The doors unlock upon loss of power controlling the lock or lock mechanism.
3. The door locks shall have the capability of being unlocked by a signal from the fire command center.
4. The initiation of an irreversible process which will release the latch in not more than 15 seconds when a force of not more than 15 pounds (67 N) is applied for 1 second to the release device. Initiation of the irreversible process shall activate an audible signal in the vicinity of the door. Once the door lock has been released by the application of force to the releasing device, relocking shall be by manual means only.

**Exception:** Where approved, a delay of not more than 30 seconds is permitted.

5. A sign shall be provided on the door located above and within 12 inches (305 mm) of the release device reading: PUSH UNTIL ALARM SOUNDS. DOOR CAN BE OPENED IN 15 [30] SECONDS.
6. Emergency lighting shall be provided at the door.

**1008.1.8.7 Stairway doors.** Interior stairway means of egress doors shall be openable from both sides without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort.

**Exceptions:**

1. Stairway discharge doors shall be openable 2. This section shall not apply to doors arranged in accordance with Section 403.12 of the International Building Code. 3. In stairways serving not more than four stories, doors are permitted to be locked from the side opposite the egress side, provided they are openable from the egress side and capable of being unlocked simultaneously without unlatching upon a signal from the fire command center, if present, or a signal by emergency personnel from a single location inside the main entrance to the building.

**1008.1.9 Panic and fire exit hardware.** Where panic and fire exit hardware is installed, it shall comply with the following:

1. The actuating portion of the releasing device shall extend at least one-half of the door leaf width.
2. A maximum unlatching force of 15 pounds (67 N). Each door in a means of egress from an occupancy of Group A or E having an occupant load of 100 or more and any occupancy of Group H- 1, H-2, H-3 or H5 shall not be provided with a latch or lock unless it is panic hardware or fire exit hardware. If balanced doors are used and panic hardware is required, the panic hardware shall be the push-pad type and the pad shall not extend more than one-half the width of the door measured from the latch side.

**EXPLANATION**

All exit doors shall be easily opened from the interior without the use of a key, combination, or any special knowledge or effort. One simple, single motion should open the door. Doors need to swing open easily. If the door is equipped with a deadbolt, the bolt must release with the same motion that opens the door knob or latch. No chains, bolts, bars, etc. are allowed. In Group B, F, M, S and A-3 Occupancies and all churches, only the front or main door may have a key operated deadbolt. Both the inside and outside mechanism must be operated with a key-no thumb-latches. Additionally, if key operated deadbolt type of lock is employed, a permanent, durable sign must be posted over the door stating, "THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHEN BUILDING IS OCCUPIED". If the door served by this deadbolt type lock has two doors or leaves, the flush bolts on the other door must release with the keyed deadbolt. Again, only one motion unlocks both doors. Flush mounted barrel bolts and latches on the edge of the door are prohibited.

**RATIONALE**

In the event of a fire or emergency, people must not be trapped inside a building because of a special lock or security device. Whenever the building is occupied, a person shall be able to walk to any exit door and easily, without a special knowledge or effort, open the door and exit to a public way. This rule also applies to the rear doors of stores and offices as a person may be trapped between the fire and the front door, and thus the need to exit from the rear door.

The sign, THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED DURING BUSINESS HOURS, shall be posted over the main exit door as a reminder that if the exception to no special knowledge or effort hardware is utilized, the door must remain unlocked when the building is occupied.