

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

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INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

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2013-01	Special Locking Arrangements for Schools			02/06/13
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The recent Sandy Hook shooting has renewed the interest in school security, especially as it relates to “locking down” the facilities. Many school districts are responding to the Sandy Hook incident by installing dead bolt style locks on classroom doors. This solution was found to be a relatively easy and inexpensive way to secure the facilities. Unfortunately this quick solution, although it may enhance security, compromises other fire and emergency action measures. In addition, installing unlisted hardware on a listed door may void that door’s listing

NFPA 101, 2009 edition, section 7.2.1.5.2 states: “Locks, if provided, shall not require the use of a key, a tool, or special knowledge or effort for operation from the egress side.” Section 7.2.1.5.9.2 clarifies the requirement with the following: “The releasing mechanism shall open the door leaf with **not more than one releasing operation....**

Any door in a school can be secured against unwanted entry. No doors, that are part of a means of egress, can be secured against the egress travel path. Therefore classroom doors leading to a corridor cannot be secured with any type of locking mechanism other than one that is integral to the latching device. The lock and latching device must be able to release with one movement. Not one movement to open the lock and one to open the latch, that action requires two movements. One action must release both devices.

Many classrooms have communicating doors between rooms. These doors can be secured provided that they are not part of the means of egress, and they are not being used to access separate smoke compartments in lieu of automatic sprinklers being installed.

The code still allows for delayed egress locking systems and access controlled egress assemblies. There are specific requirements to be followed for both of these options.

The State Fire Marshal is committed to insuring that all school children, teachers and staff have a safe environment in which to study and work. It is strongly recommended that school, fire, and police officials collaborate on a unified emergency plan that addresses all of their concerns and will provide for a safer environment in all of New Hampshire's schools.