

2021 NFPA 101 – Life Safety Code

Chapter 14 – New Educational Occupancies

14.2.2.2.4* Locking of Classroom Doors and Doors to Other Instructional Spaces.

Classroom doors and doors to other instructional spaces shall be permitted to be locked provided that the locking means is approved and all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The locking means shall be capable of being engaged from the egress side of the door without opening the door.
- (2) The unlocking and unlatching from the egress side of the door shall be accomplished without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or effort.
- (3) The releasing mechanism shall open the door leaf with not more than one releasing motion.
- (4) The releasing mechanism for unlocking and unlatching shall be located at a height not less than 34 in. (865 mm) and not exceeding 48 in. (1220 mm) above the finished floor.
- (5) Locks, if remotely engaged, shall be unlockable from the egress side of the door without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or effort.
- (6) The door shall be capable of being unlocked and opened from outside the room with the necessary key or other credential.
- (7) The locking means shall not modify the door closer, panic hardware, or fire exit hardware or impair their operation.
- (8) Modifications to fire door assemblies, including door hardware, shall be in accordance with NFPA 80.
- (9) The emergency action plan, required by 14.7.1, shall address the use of the locking and unlocking means from both sides of the door.
- (10) Staff shall be drilled in the engagement and release of the locking means, from both sides of the door, as part of the emergency egress drills required by 14.7.2.

Chapter 15 – Existing Educational Occupancies

15.2.2.2.4* Locking of Classroom Doors and Other Instructional Spaces.

15.2.2.2.4.1 Classroom doors and doors to other instructional spaces shall be permitted to be locked provided that the locking means is approved and all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The locking means shall be capable of being engaged from the egress side of the door without opening the door.
- (2) The unlocking and unlatching from the egress side of the door shall be accomplished without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or effort.
- (3)* Two non-simultaneous releasing motions shall be permitted where approved by the authority having jurisdiction.
- (4) The releasing mechanism for unlocking and unlatching shall be located at a height not less than 34 in. (865 mm) and not exceeding 48 in. (1220 mm) above the finished floor.
- (5) Locks, if remotely engaged, shall be unlockable from the egress side of the door without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or effort.
- (6) The door shall be capable of being unlocked and opened from outside the room with the necessary key or other credential.
- (7) The locking means shall not modify the door closer, panic hardware, or fire exit hardware or impair their operation.
- (8) Modifications to fire door assemblies, including door hardware, shall be in accordance with NFPA 80.
- (9) The emergency action plan, required by 15.7.1, shall address the use of the locking and unlocking means from both sides of the door.
- (10) Staff shall be drilled in the engagement and release of the locking means, from both sides of the door, as part of the emergency egress drills required by 15.7.2.

Enhanced Content

For the 2021 edition of the Code, 15.2.2.2.4.1(3) was revised to allow two non-simultaneous releasing motions to be permitted for existing educational occupancies where approved by the AHJ. The retrofit of an entire existing educational occupancy with the hotel-style locks may be cost prohibitive or physically not possible depending on the door. The ten criteria required as part of 15.2.2.2.4.1, including approval of the AHJ, provide an opportunity to lock classroom doors in existing educational occupancies where a single releasing motion is not possible. In recent years, more barricade type devices have entered the market and unfortunately gained popularity in some areas. These types of devices, which prevent emergency responders from entering a room and prevent free and unobstructed egress, clearly violate

one of the fundamental pillars of the Code. The allowance for two non-simultaneous releasing motions provides existing educational occupancies with a safer locking alternative to the barricade type devices.

15.2.2.2.4.2

Where existing classroom doors and doors to instructional spaces are replaced, they shall comply with the provisions of 14.2.2.2.4.

Enhanced Content

Paragraph 15.2.2.2.4.2 is new to the 2021 edition of the Code. Typically, the replacement in kind or strengthening or upgrading of building elements is considered a renovation. Renovations per Chapter 43 would permit the work to comply with the existing occupancy requirements. However, in the case of an entire door being replaced, Chapter 15 requires compliance with the door locking requirements for new occupancies (14.2.2.2.4). This reinforces that the use of two non-simultaneous releasing motions is only permitted where it is impractical or not possible to permit locking arrangements that open the door with only one releasing motion.