

BHMA[®] CODES IN CONTEXT[™]

2024 IBC and IFC – Updates Affecting Doors, Door Hardware, and Door Operations

FOCUS:

Key-Operated Locking Devices – Clarification of which exterior doors or main doors are permitted to be locked when a building or space is not occupied.

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Item 3 of Section 1010.2.4 of the 2024 IBC and IFC permits the main doors of specified occupancies to be secured with key-operated locks on the egress side when the building or space is not occupied. Key-operated locks are typically interpreted to mean locks with key cylinders on both sides, such as a double cylinder dead bolt. This application is limited by the I-Codes to Assembly occupancies with a calculated occupant load of 300 people or less, Business, Factory, Mercantile, and Storage occupancies, and places of religious worship.

Prior to the 2015 editions, these codes specifically stated that key-operated locks were permitted on the main exterior door or doors serving the referenced building types if all other criteria were met. The 2015 I-Codes were revised by removing the word “exterior” with the intent of permitting the main doors to some interior spaces to be equipped with key-operated locks. One example would be an



A change to the 2024 I-Codes clarifies that key-operated locking devices are permitted on the main doors to a tenant space or the main exterior door or doors to a building, if all other requirements of the code are met.

enclosed shopping mall with interior doors opening to retail stores or restaurants.

When key-operated locks are installed on the main entrance of a building or retail store, the assumption is that the space could not be open for business or occupied with the door locked. Unfortunately, the revised provisions were interpreted by some to mean that any doors that could be considered the main doors to a space

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(in the specified occupancies) could be locked with key-operated locks, preventing ingress and/or egress. But the intent of the codes was to limit their use to very specific doors, not to any interior door leading to a space.

The revisions in the 2024 I-Codes clarify that key operated locks can be used on the main exterior door or doors to a building, or the main doors to a tenant space. These locks must only

be locked when the building or space is not occupied. Where these key-operated locks are permitted, the locks are required to be readily distinguishable as locked and a sign is required adjacent to the door on the egress side stating: THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHEN THIS SPACE IS OCCUPIED. The Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) may revoke permission for use of the key-operated lock for due cause.

**THIS DOOR TO
REMAIN
UNLOCKED WHEN
THIS SPACE IS
OCCUPIED**

Prescriptive language in the codes states the required text that must appear on the door signage when key-operated locks are installed.



Key-operated locks must be readily distinguishable as locked, which can be accomplished by a locked/unlocked indicator.

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