



Date: December 1, 2023
To: City of Houston HPW-HPC
Attention: CCM
From: Jensen Hughes
Subject: Locking Arrangements in Group E Occupancies

This technical memo is provided to describe the significant changes to the Houston Construction Codes with regards to the requirements for locking arrangements in Group E Occupancies.

These revisions provide criteria in the code and additional guidance which balance the challenges of providing protection for students and teachers in the classroom while at the same time providing for free and immediate egress.

Many new and existing schools and day care facilities design for lockdown situations. For educational facilities and Group I-4 occupancies, these changes provide consistent requirements for both new and existing buildings (**Section 1010.2.8**).

Door locksets with “classroom security function” are a comparable cost to the traditional “classroom function” door locksets. The most common configuration of a classroom security function lockset is the ability to lock the door from inside the classroom with a key preventing entry into the classroom; and for egress, the door may be easily opened from inside the classroom without a key by a single action on the lever handle. On the outside of the classroom, the door may be locked and locked with a key.

Many of the traditional locksets required the instructor to leave the classroom and lock the door with a key from the hallway side, then re-enter the classroom. This action places the instructor at risk by forcing them to leave the classroom and become exposed in the hallway. The classroom security function eliminates the need to leave the classroom to lock the door and it still allows unrestricted egress from inside the classroom in accordance with **Section 1010.1.4.4**.

Section 1010.1.4.4.1 is relocated so it is a part of the main requirement. This section allows the remote operation of classroom locks. This means that the doors can be locked electrically from a single location. This design allows all of the classroom doors to be locked, and unlocked, with a single switch. This switch can be designed to be key operated to add an additional level of security.

Additionally, this language requires that the door shall be unlockable from outside the classroom. This allows fire fighters, school personnel, or law enforcement to obtain entry even after the door is locked from the inside. This can be accomplished at the door with a key, or remotely with electric lock operation.

memo.

2021 Fire Code Changes –

~~1010.1.4.4~~ **1010.2.8 Locking Arrangements in Educational Occupancies.** In Group E **occupancies**, and Group B educational occupancies **and Group I-4 occupancies**, egress doors from classrooms, offices and other occupied **rooms shall be permitted to be provided** with locking arrangements designed to keep intruders from entering the room **where shall comply with** all the following conditions ~~are met~~:

1. The door shall be capable of being unlocked from outside the door with the key or other approved means.
2. The door shall be openable from within the room in accordance with Section 1010.1.2.
3. Modifications shall be made to listed panic hardware, fire door hardware or door closers.
4. **Modifications to fire door assemblies shall be in accordance with NFPA 80.**

~~1010.1.4.4.1 Remote Operation of Locks.~~ **Remote locking or unlocking of doors from an approved location shall be permitted in addition to the unlocking operation in Item 1.**