

Clarification on Locking Requirements for Stairway Doors

This document is intended to provide design professionals the most recent Austin Fire (AFD) clarification of the below referenced standard section related to locking requirements for interior stairway means of egress doors.

REFERENCES

International Building Code (IBC) – 2024 Edition, Section 1010.2.6

International Fire Code (IFC) – 2024 Edition, Section 508.1.6, as amended by the City of Austin

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

AFD revised sections 3 and 3.1 of IBC, Section 1010.2.6, as shown below.

Stairway Doors, Section 1010.2.26

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 from the egress side and shall only be locked from the opposite side.
2. This section shall not apply to doors arranged in accordance with [Section 403.5.3](#) of the *International Building Code*.
3. In stairways in a building not classified as high-rise by Section 403 (High-Rise Buildings), stairway means of egress doors shall not be locked from the side opposite the egress side, unless they are openable from the egress side and capable of being unlocked simultaneously without unlatching and shall meet all of the following requirements:
 - 3.1. Shall unlock simultaneously upon activation of a toggle switch inside a Knox Key Box located on the exterior of the building. A Knox Key Box containing a toggle switch shall be provided next to each stairway exit discharge door that contains access controls. Signage with the words “Fire Dept. Security Override” shall be permanently mounted not more than 6 inches above the Knox Key Box. The signage shall be constructed out of durable, all-weather materials, with reflective white letters, not less than 1 inch in height, on a red background.
 - 3.2. Shall unlock simultaneously upon activation of a fire alarm signal when a fire alarm system is present in an area served by the stairway.

- 3.3. Shall unlock upon failure of the power supply to the electric lock or the locking system.
4. *Stairway exit* doors shall be openable from the egress side and shall only be locked from the opposite side in Group B, F, M and S occupancies where the only interior access to the tenant space is from a single *exit stairway* where permitted in [Section 1006.3.4](#).
 5. *Stairway* exit doors shall be openable from the egress side and shall only be locked from the opposite side in Group R-2 occupancies where the only interior access to the *dwelling unit* is from a single exit stairway where permitted in [Section 1006.3.4](#).

High-rise buildings shall meet the requirements of the Amended 2024 IFC Section 508.1.6, Item #7, which states the following: 'Controls for unlocking stairway doors simultaneously. Stairways doors shall be physically unlocked by UL listed fire alarm system components. The unlocking means shall be a red light switch mounted on the wall in the command room with appropriate signage or other approved method.'