



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Center for the Prevention of School Violence

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Governor

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INFORMATION ABOUT LOCKING MECHANISMS

The viewing of the “Critical Incident Response” video in communities across North Carolina has prompted questions about appropriate locking mechanisms in schools. The following memorandum has been distributed by the North Carolina Department of Insurance – Office of State Fire Marshal to Code Enforcement Officials and Other Interested Parties in North Carolina:

An excellent video and publication “Critical Incident Response” has been distributed to local schools, law enforcement and emergency responders by the Attorney General’s office, [Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Center for the Prevention of School Violence, and Department of Public Instruction]. It contains much useful information about how to respond to crisis on the school campus. It has, however, raised some concern with DPI/OSP and DOI/OSFM in regard to installing new or additional locks or deadbolts on egress doors. We urge you to notify your local school officials that the local Code Enforcement Official needs to be consulted prior to installing any locks on egress doors. For compliance with the North Carolina State Building Code, only single-operation latching/locking devices that are operable from the occupied side of the door are permitted on egress doors.

One example shown in the video is a “lever-handled” classroom lockset, key-locked from the corridor side, and is an appropriate combination latching/locking device. Two additional examples show secondary “thumb-turn” locks. These devices may not be installed either by themselves or in addition to the primary classroom lockset device. While not shown in the video, it is worthwhile to note that manually operated flush bolts or surface bolts are prohibited on egress doors.

To reiterate, local officials should be consulted by schools when they are considering installing new or additional locking mechanisms. Additionally, existing locking mechanisms in schools should also be checked for code compliance.