

### FOCUS:

#### Egress Doors Serving Exterior Spaces

### SUMMER 2022 ISSUE

**The 2021 IBC and 2021 IFC include new provisions permitting locking of doors in the means of egress from exterior spaces through a building provided specific requirements are met. New Item 8 of 1010.2.4 explicitly permits locks and latches to prevent egress from an exterior space through the building where the conditions listed are met:**

8. Other than egress courts, where occupants must egress from an exterior space through the building for means of egress, exit access doors shall be permitted to be equipped with an approved locking device where installed and operated in accordance with all of the following:

8.1. The maximum occupant load shall be posted where required by Section 1004.9. Such signage shall be permanently affixed inside the building and shall be posted in a conspicuous space near all the exit access doorways.

8.2. A weatherproof telephone or two-way communication system installed in accordance with Sections 1009.8.1 and 1009.8.2 shall be located adjacent to not less than one required exit access door on the exterior side.

8.3. The egress door locking device is readily distinguishable as locked and shall be a key-operated locking device.

8.4. A clear window or glazed door opening, not less than 5

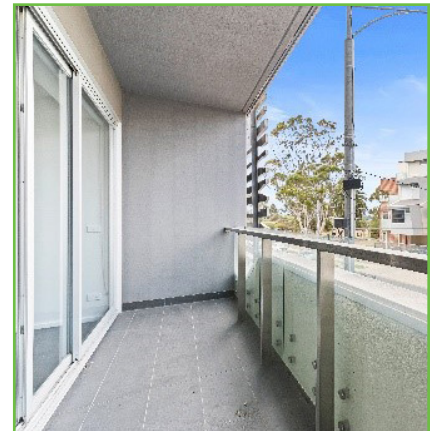
square feet (0.46 m<sup>2</sup>) in area, shall be provided at each exit access door to determine if there are occupants using the outdoor area.

8.5. A readily visible, durable sign shall be posted on the interior side on or adjacent to each locked required exit access door serving the exterior area stating: THIS DOOR TO REMAIN UNLOCKED WHEN THE OUTDOOR AREA IS OCCUPIED. The letters on the sign shall be not less than 1 inch high on a contrasting background.

8.6. The occupant load of the occupied exterior area shall not exceed 300 in accordance with Section 1004.8.

Outdoor occupied areas where occupants must re-enter the building to egress were considered by previous editions of the IBC and IFC to be the same as any room inside the building. That means unobstructed egress was required to be available from the outdoor area at all times. There were no exceptions to this rule but it was not unusual for these doors to have locks placed on them for security purposes.

Locking these doors created the potential for people to get locked out with no way to safely egress through the building in an emergency until rescued. Common situations are upper level decks and occupied roofs where there isn't access to an exterior stair; and doors serving grade-level outdoor areas where one or more of the required means of egress paths are through the building.



For exterior balconies related to residential dwelling units and private offices (250SF balcony, maximum), the requirements for lock type, signage, two-way communication, and vision panels do not apply.

In addition to permitting locking of doors in the means of egress from exterior spaces, the 2021 IBC and IFC include new provisions permitting the locking of doors which provide access to and from exterior balconies and decks. Items 8 and 9 of 1010.2.4 were added to the 2021 IBC and IFC:

9. Locking devices are permitted on doors to balconies, decks or other exterior spaces serving individual dwelling or sleeping units.

10. Locking devices are permitted on doors to balconies, decks or other exterior spaces of 250 square feet or less, serving a private office space.

**DISCLAIMER:** BHMA provides this information as a service. Refer to the jurisdiction's building codes and the project requirements. If questions, consult the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).