

FOCUS:

Doors Serving Electrical Rooms and
Refrigeration Machinery Rooms

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Panic hardware has been required in specific locations per the IBC and IFC and per the National Electrical Code (NFPA 70). But, the previous IBC and IFC requirements didn't quite match the NEC requirements. The 2021 IBC and 2021 IFC requirements are now more consistent with NFPA 70 requirements regarding panic hardware on doors serving rooms containing electrical equipment.

The 2021 IBC and IFC require exit or exit access doors serving transformer vaults, battery or energy storage rooms, and modular data centers to be equipped with panic hardware or fire exit hardware. Also required to have panic hardware or fire exit hardware, and swing in the direction of egress, are exit doors from rooms with electrical equipment rated 800 amps or higher with overcurrent devices, switching devices, or control devices, and where the exit doors are less than 25 feet from the working space around this equipment.

In addition, the 2021 IBC and IFC require panic hardware on the egress side of doors serving refrigeration rooms larger than 1000 sq. ft. The IBC and IFC have long required refrigeration machinery rooms larger than 1000 sq ft to have not less than two exit / exit access doors.



For rooms housing certain types of electrical equipment, panic hardware is required for doors that latch or lock, located within 25 feet of the required working space.

What's new for the 2021 IBC and IFC is these doors are required to swing in the direction of egress travel, and are to be equipped with panic hardware or fire exit hardware.

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).