

Door Security + Safety

DHI'S PUBLICATION FOR DOOR SECURITY + SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

MAY 2026

Lessons From a School Shooting Survivor

SDC

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SCHOOL SAFETY

INSIDE:

- + MANAGING RISK AT CRITICAL ENTRY POINTS
- + UTILIZING FIRE DOORS FOR ENHANCED SCHOOL SECURITY
- + THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCKED DOORS
- + 2025 DHI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS



BALANCING SCHOOL SAFETY WITH CODES: AVOIDING UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES



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IN 2025, THE UNITED STATES RECORDED THE FEWEST K-12 SCHOOL SHOOTING INCIDENTS AND FATALITIES IN FIVE YEARS, WITH 18 SHOOTINGS RESULTING IN INJURY OR DEATH AND SEVEN FATALITIES NATIONWIDE. WHILE THIS DECLINE OFFERS CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM, IT DOES NOT DIMINISH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL SAFETY PROFESSIONALS TO ADDRESS ALL HAZARDS WITHOUT UNDERMINING FOUNDATIONAL LIFE SAFETY PRINCIPLES EMBEDDED IN BUILDING AND FIRE CODES.

At the architectural and hardware level, doors and access control systems play a critical role in daily security and emergency response. These elements define the boundary between interior spaces and external threats, and they must simultaneously support rapid lockdown, free egress, and first-responder access. When security enhancements fail to align with model codes such as the International Building Code (IBC), International Fire Code (IFC), and NFPA 101 - Life Safety Code, they can create unintended and dangerous consequences that compromise overall safety.

Building and fire codes are not optional guidelines. They exist to ensure occupants can exit buildings quickly and safely during fires, medical emergencies, or other life-threatening events. A core principle across these codes is that egress must be possible without special tools, keys, or prior knowledge. Doors along a means of egress are designed to allow free exit under stress, from any point in a space to a public way, and codes are explicit that exit doors may be secured against unauthorized entry but never against exit in an emergency.

Security measures that prioritize lockdown while impeding egress introduce serious risks. A device that works during an active shooter scenario, but delays evacuation during a fire, can result in tragic secondary outcomes. Similarly, systems that restrict access for emergency responders can delay life-saving intervention. Fire marshal guidance and documented incidents consistently warn against improvised or temporary barricade devices, which often violate egress and accessibility requirements and can trap occupants during emergencies.

Effective school safety strategies integrate security hardware with strict code compliance. When properly specified and installed, locking systems can support rapid lockdown while still allowing free egress and authorized external access. NFPA 101 and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards require that door hardware be operable with a single action and without excessive force, ensuring accessibility for all occupants under stress.

Beyond hardware, schools benefit most from a layered safety approach. Physical access control should be combined with clear sightlines, reliable emergency communications, staff training, and well-practiced emergency response plans. Door locks alone cannot compensate for gaps in planning, training, or coordination.

Security enhancements that violate building or fire codes ultimately undermine safety goals. Devices that block egress or restrict responder access not only endanger students and staff during fires or medical emergencies, but also expose school districts to increased legal and regulatory liability.

In the context of decreasing — but still heartbreaking — violence against students, schools must adopt security measures that are safe by design, compliant by specification, and effective under stress. Compliance with life safety and building codes is not bureaucracy. It is a baseline commitment to preserving life, freedom of movement, and emergency access. Only by respecting these standards can schools protect their communities from both threat and unintended harm. +



Classroom doors must support lockdown when needed while always preserving free egress, accessibility, and emergency responder access in compliance with fire and life safety codes.

2025

DHI Achievement Award Recipients

DHI offers congratulations and thanks to the many people who give so much to the door security and safety industry. We are proud to highlight the award winners who demonstrate exemplary effort and dedication. This year's award recipients are highlighted on the following pages.

FELLOW AWARDS 38

- ★ Richard Bradbury, DEHC, DHC, CFDAI, DHT, FDHI
- ★ Rob Dippell

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- ★ Katie Flower Britt, DAOC, CFDAI, FDHI
- ★ Mark A. Kuhn, FDHI, AOC, AHC, CFDAI, DHT, DHC, CDT, CSI

AWARD OF MERIT 42

- ★ Austin Watson, EHC, CFDAI, DHT

ROBERT G. RYAN EDITORIAL AWARDS 43

- ★ Kerby Lecka
- ★ Amy Sweeting
- ★ Christin Kinman, MPH
- ★ Qianyan Cheng

ROBERT G. RYAN EDITORIAL AWARDS

This award is presented to the best volunteer authors of articles in *Door Security + Safety* magazine written during the previous calendar year. Awards are presented for business and technical topics.

BUSINESS ARTICLES

★ FIRST PLACE



Electronic Access Control Business Opportunities in the Long-Term Care Market

By Kerby Lecka
Marketing Director,
SDC—Security Door Controls

APRIL 2024 ISSUE

★ SECOND PLACE



Repurpose, Reuse, Rejuvenate: Making the Most of Renovations

By Amy Sweeting
Product Manager for Interior Product
Solutions, Construction Specialties

JUNE/JULY 2024 ISSUE

TECHNICAL ARTICLES

★ FIRST PLACE



A Systems-Based Approach to School Safety

By Christin Kinman, MPH
End User Sales Consultant, Allegion

MAY 2024

★ SECOND PLACE



One Credential, Infinite Access: Redefining Multi-Use Tenant Security

By Qianyan Cheng
Co-Founder and Vice President of Product
Development, INOX by Unison Hardware

AUGUST 2024