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Touchless Actuator Installation Considerations

Installing or replacing a manual switch with a touchless actuator is easy provided you ask the right questions.

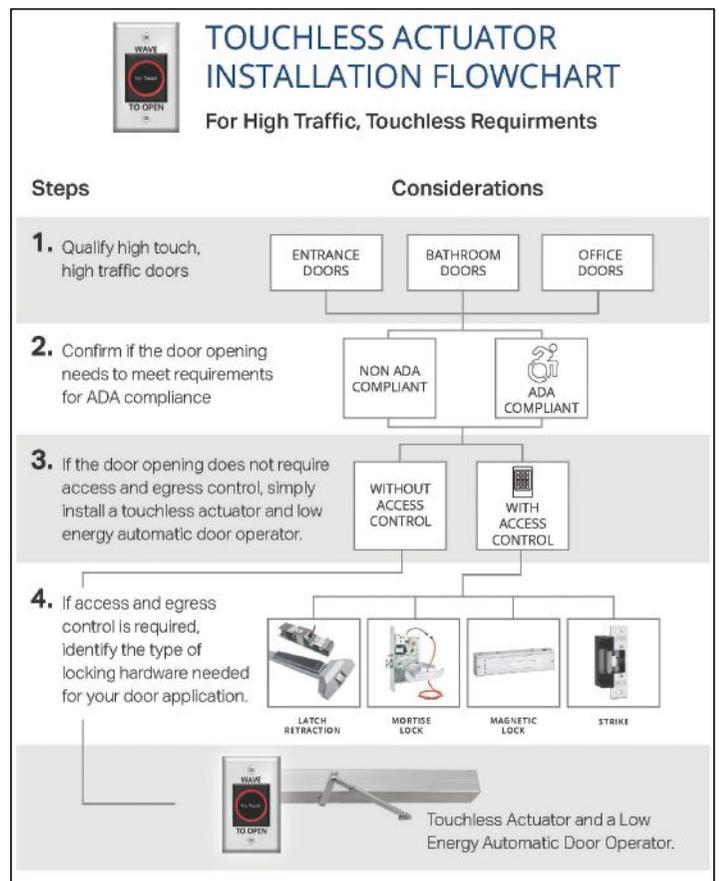
Thanks to the pandemic, touchless, hands-free door control solutions and accessories have almost become a standard practice instead of an application-specific option for specialized requirements. Almost every electrified door component and access control system manufacturer offers some key element or turnkey solution to reduce contamination and the spread of infections from COVID-19, influenza and other communicable diseases.

A basic product component of these offerings are touchless actuators, also known as touchless switches. These actuators require only a simple wave of the hand in front of them to activate a switch and control electric locks or strikes, maglocks or automatic door operators for entry or egress.

If there's a request to convert or replace an existing switch (key switch, push switch, etc.) that takes physical contact to activate an electric door-control component for entry or egress, installation can be as simple as removing the old switch and wiring in the new touchless actuator. But, if you're installing a touchless actuator to control door entry or egress where there has been no switch, you'll have to consider the door opening before you begin the installation process.

Door Considerations

Begin by determining whether the door is in a low-traffic or high-traffic area and what the objective is for installing a touchless actuator. Is this for low-touch convenience or for a truly hands-free, touchless solution? If it's low



touch only, chances are you can pair the actuator with the existing electrified locking hardware and you're finished.

But if a truly touchless solution is desired, you have several choices. Typically, touchless solutions are applied to high-touch, high-traffic doors to eliminate touchpoints and improve facility cleanliness. On a door that has nonlatching hardware, you can pair a low-energy swing-door operator with a touchless actuator to create a hands-free hygienic system. By placing a touchless actuator on the outside and inside of

the doorway, the door operator can be activated by the wave of a hand for access and egress while still meeting fire and life-safety requirements.

You should qualify any high-touch, high-traffic door at entrances, meeting rooms, offices or bathrooms that can be upgraded to help businesses, facilities and campuses to stay safer. If the door opening doesn't require access and egress control, simply specify or install an automatic door operator and a touchless actuator to accomplish your goal. This hands-free solution can be a quick and easy retrofit opportunity.

The pairing of touchless switches and a door operator on a nonlatching door also might meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements if the door has "Activate Switch To Operate" signage on both sides of the door. Be

careful though, because as this is an area of interpretation by the local authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) who should be consulted before you proceed.

However, if access and egress control are required, identify the type of electrified locking hardware — exit device, lockset, maglock or electric strike — necessary to work with the automatic door operator and touchless actuator.

When you retrofit or design a hands-free door solution, invest in the time to identify other door openings that have or might benefit from access control and confirm the category of locking hardware necessary for that application. The Touchless Actuator Installation Flowchart (facing page) can guide your recommendation of a touchless actuator or a hands-free door solution.

During the pandemic, federal, state,

county and local authorities published reopening resources and policy guidelines that pertain to retrofitting facilities to make them safer for public health. Some of these guidelines might be used to update building and safety requirements permanently and apply to new and retrofit projects. It's possible that many low-touch and touchless requirements will be here to stay. Touchless actuators are a convenient product solution that also is here to stay.

Keep in mind that even with national ANSI and ADA standards, building code enforcement that pertains to automatic doors and switch placement varies across the country. Consult your local AHJ for compliance requirements. ■■

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