STATE OF MICHIGAN
RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
BUREAU OF FIRE SERVICES
JULIE SECONTINE
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

November 10, 2016

Re: Classroom Door Locking Requirements in College and University Buildings

Dear College/University Facility Manager:

The Bureau of Fire Services (BFS) has been made aware that several colleges and universities are adding dead bolt locks to classroom doors. The addition of these locks violates the New and Existing School, College and University Fire Safety Rules which adopt the 2012 edition of NFPA 101, with Michigan amendments promulgated under Public Act 207 of 1941.

Colleges and universities face several life safety issues that have to be coordinated together in order to achieve success. Fires, tornados, active shooters and building security are issues that colleges and universities have to address. Providing extra security measures, such as dead bolts on classroom doors, must be coordinated with applicable fire safety requirements. The Fire Safety Rules and NFPA 101, Section 7.2.1.5.10.2 state, "the releasing mechanism shall open the door leaf with not more than one releasing operation." Installing dead bolt locks create a second releasing mechanism in order to open the door from the egress side and is in violation of the Fire Safety Rules and the NFPA 101, Section 7.2.1.5.10.2.

Installing door hardware that releases the door latch and dead bolt in one motion similar to hardware found in hotels is a possible solution. A college or university that has an emergency preparedness plan, lockdown drills and training, could provide barricade devices that meet compliance with BFS.

BFS is concerned about the security of our students and teachers in our colleges/universities and will continue to work with facilities to provide solutions that will provide security while maintaining fire safety. Refer to Fire Marshal Bulletin 2 – Fire, Tornado and Lockdown Drills for more information regarding classroom barricade devices. Certain barricade devices, with proper training and installation, can be used during lock-down emergencies.

Thank you,

Julie Secontine
State Fire Marshal

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611 OTTAWA ST., 4TH FLOOR • P.O. BOX 30700 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/bfs • (517) 241-8847 • Fax: (517) 332-1427 or (517) 332-1428