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BY MARANDA THOMPSON

Retrofitting Lockdown Locks

A lockdown solution that is code-compliant and economical

Over the last 20 years, Securitech has put a special focus on developing products that provide a safe haven for students. Product designs are driven by the needs of architects, law enforcement, security directors, educators and government officials to create problem-solving solutions to ensure safe learning environments for future generations.

To better cater to the restrictive budgets of schools, Securitech went back to the drawing board to create and help fulfill a dire need.

LOCKDOWN CHALLENGES

Companies offering classroom lockdown solutions have evolved rapidly in the last 10 years, in an unfortunate era of mass shootings. Each tragedy has provided momentum, as well as state and federal funds, to initiatives that aim to keep schools safe.

A vast majority of schools across the country were built between 1950 and 1970 to meet the demand of the Baby Boom generation. Many of these schools still have original classroom function door locks that were not designed to confront the security issues faced today.

Realistically, for a school district to implement the most sophisticated security systems outlined by recognized security recommendations, costs can rise to an estimated \$540,000 per high school, or nearly \$36 billion for schools nationwide. Many schools with idealistic goals for improvements come to realize that these require a larger than expected investment.

Seeing this cost roadblock as an opportunity, after-market devices began to appear with the promise of a cheap solution to make schools, specifically classroom doors, safe and secure. These products, known to us as barricade devices, gloss over well-established fire and life safety code requirements. Not only can first responders and school administrators not open the door if the illegal barricade has been engaged, when such devices are used by an unauthorized person, there is potential to cause harm.

Statistically, while active shootings are a real threat in the United States, most school-related violence occurs in classrooms as a result of assault, bullying or theft. Besides impeding the ability to exit and not meeting ADA requirements, these devices allow anyone to trap other students or a teacher in a room, creating a new set of life-safety challenges.

A "RED BUTTON" SOLUTION

Securitech first addressed the need to enable anyone within the room to quickly lock down the room by a press of a button (not requiring a key) with the QID: Quick Intruder Deadbolt series. This replacement lock not only locked down the exterior lever, but also provided a stainless steel deadbolt for added security.

The next step was to create the first retrofit barricade product that maintained the three critical tenets of classroom locking: single motion egress, keyed entry at all times, and ADA compliance.

The result is the recently introduced SAFEBOLT™ series, a mechanical red pushbutton lockdown lockset, which installs quickly and easily over existing cylindrical locksets, saving schools the substantial cost of replacing their locksets and keying systems.

The district purchased SAFEBOLT locks like this one with the goal of securing classrooms from within without the use of a key. Austin Wunnicke, the 18-year-old son of the school's head of maintenance, was able to install the SAFEBOLT in 15 minutes.





Jim Wunnicke, the head of maintenance for River Ridge schools, liked that the SAFEBOLT allowed existing locks to stay in place while upgrading security. There were some concerns about the temptation posed by a red pushbutton in an elementary school, but there have been no incidents of students pressing the button in an unauthorized manner.

SAFEBOLT, like its sister solution QID, empowers anyone in the classroom to safely secure the door without trapping anyone. Designed with full compliance with existing NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) and IBC (International Building Code) and other codes, AHJs (Authorities Having Jurisdictions) and fire marshals do not need to write exemptions to allow the use of SAFEBOLT.

Eliminating many problems schools faced, Securitech's latest solution affords staff and students the ability to quickly and effectively secure themselves at the press of a button in the event of an emergency. In short, SAFEBOLT offers a retrofit solution and a locking bolt that can be added to the door and maintain single motion egress.

Active shooter incidents are known to last approximately five minutes, giving staff and students little time to maintain composure and guide one another to the safe haven area of the classroom. Where once they would have needed to apply fine motor skills to align and apply a barricade device, stack furniture or search for keys and lock the door from the outside (if the teacher is present), Securitech's SAFEBOLT eliminates all these steps by simply pressing the red button.

Adding a secondary deadbolt lock to the door violates the single motion egress code, however SAFEBOLT overcomes this by retracting with the normal rotation of the interior lever.

HOW ONE SCHOOL SUCCEEDED

In June 2018, the Wisconsin Department of Justice awarded River Ridge School District \$55,000 toward upgrading school security. River Ridge School District is comprised of an elementary, middle and high school, all on one campus, and was one of the first 20 state schools to receive grant funding.

Inside the school, the district found several uses for the grant funds, including interior deadbolt locks for classroom doors.

Like several schools across the country, River Ridge also wanted to apply the grant towards security cameras, window enhancements, training programs, trauma kits and more. However, securing classrooms was the immediate goal.

Jim Wunnicke, the head of maintenance, was tasked with investigating locking alternatives. He searched online and discovered the SAFEBOLT. "I saw it and said 'Wow' - we get to keep our locks and add security."

The district purchased SAFEBOLT locks for the classrooms at River Ridge in the summer of 2018, with the goal of securing classrooms from within without the use of a key, as recommended by the Department of Homeland Security. Starting with the elementary wing, locksets were installed over the summer to be in place when students returned in the fall.

Previously, the school had used magnetic strips as a quick solution for classrooms. The doors were left in a locked position and teachers were instructed to remove the strips from the strike plates to enact a lockdown. After installing the Safebolt, Wunnicke said, "I think it was exactly what we needed."

After training his staff on installation, even his 18-year-old son Austin, who had no prior experience with the product, was able to install it in 15 minutes, and noted that it was pretty simple to install. The lock offers an easy-to-install metal template and sleeves of different widths to accommodate cylindrical levers.

Wunnicke noted that while there were some concerns with the pushbutton in the elementary wing, there have been no reports of students pressing the button in an unauthorized manner. The school has actively engaged in ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate) training and staff and students understand that SAFEBOLT is

to be used only for emergencies, similar to the fire alarm pull stations placed around the school. The district expects to install the SAFEBOLT solution in the middle and high school wings.

"In addition to the ease of installation, I like that the mechanism operates extremely smoothly," Wunnicke said. +



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