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In This Issue

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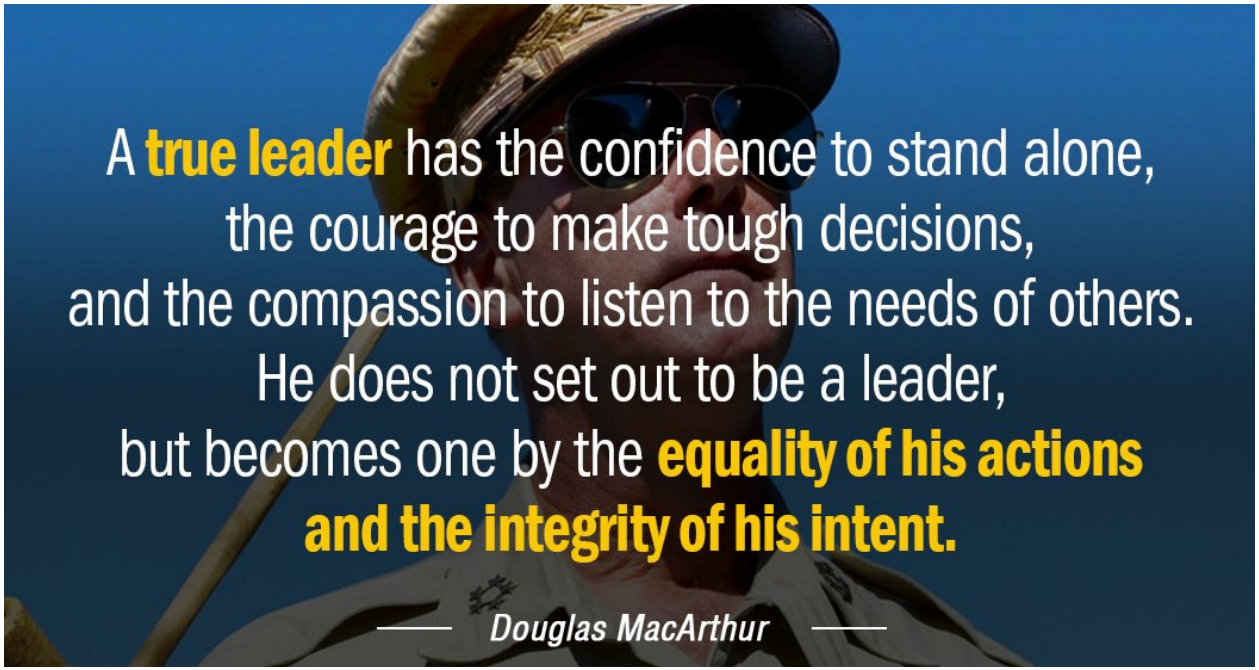
LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER

President's Thoughts

Here we are, starting a new year already. It just seems like yesterday that we were entering 2024 and beginning to understand what that year would bring. Now we are entering 2025 and out outlook had changed for the better in some cases and the worst in others. These changes are all dependent on your and your situation, but I hope that most of you will find that 2025 will be a great year and that you will achieve as much as you can stand.

The Little Rock Chapter is entering into another year where our future is uncertain. We have, at last count, 39 members in total and only about 2 or 3 members willing to step up and lead the Chapter forward. What we need is for at least 5 or 6 young members to come forward and express an interest in "taking over the management" of the Chapter. I know that sound like a lot, but when you consider that as Chapter President, I spend about 30 minutes total a month doing presidential things. I spend another hour or so being the Chapter Newsletter Editor, and maybe another 30 minutes with the other facets of leadership in the Chapter. I also spend about 30 to 45 minutes a month as the Gulf States Region Awards Chair and member of the Gulf States Region Board. When you total that us it is about 2-1/2 hours a month spent on doing things for the Chapter. Which when you consider how many hours you spend sleeping or how many hours you spend watching TV, or even how many hours you spend eating, then this a minimum investment of time for so much gain.

You may be asking yourself what you have to gain by being an officer in the Chapter. Well first you gain experience in managing people and projects (events), you learn how to delegate and maintain control, when to lead people and when to listen, you make connections all over the country, you gain access to programs and education that can only be found withing an organizational structure, and finally you make some life long friends. Leadership is not always something fall into easily. There are many facets to leadership that need to be learned and practiced. All of this can also be applied to your career and your family.



Just join in and get started, you may find out you have a knack for leadership. If you have any questions about getting involved or any other aspect of membership, please feel free to call or email me. I will answer your questions or I will find you someone who can. Think about it.

What I Learned From CSI - Networking Across the USA – Part 2

By: Gary Bergeron, CSI, CCS, GSR Technical Chair and Karina Kane, BARCH | University of Tennessee College of Architecture and Design

Denver, CO - People often speak of moments that leave a lasting impact, and this is one of those experiences. This is part two of a remarkable story about the CSI community uniting from halfway across the country to uplift a university student.

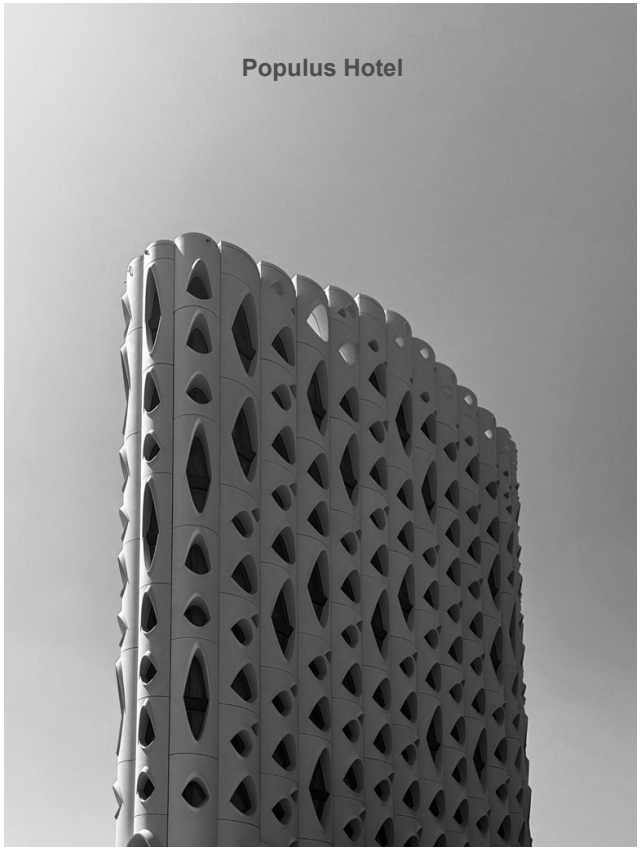
As I flew to Denver, excitement built in me with every mile. Upon my arrival, the majesty of the mountains and the crispness of the air captivated me. It was my first time to the West. The contrast with Knoxville, TN, was truly mesmerizing. Erica Thompson, the Denver CSI Treasurer and a wonderful coordinator for this trip, picked me up from the airport. Passing through downtown Denver, I felt the distance from my familiar town, and a deep sense of gratitude washed over me as I anticipated the days ahead.

The following day, I met Liz O'Sullivan, a Denver CSI member and '95 Notre Dame BArch graduate. We started our day with a tasty meal at a cherished local spot, Pete's Diner, before heading to the site of my school project. As we explored, Liz shared insights about the town's history, culture, and nearby draws like parks and schools. Arriving at the project site, previously only viewed on Google Earth, was surreal. We explored the site, with Liz offering valuable knowledge to enrich my project. Afterward, we strolled around the block, where she enlightened me about the area's diverse architectural styles.

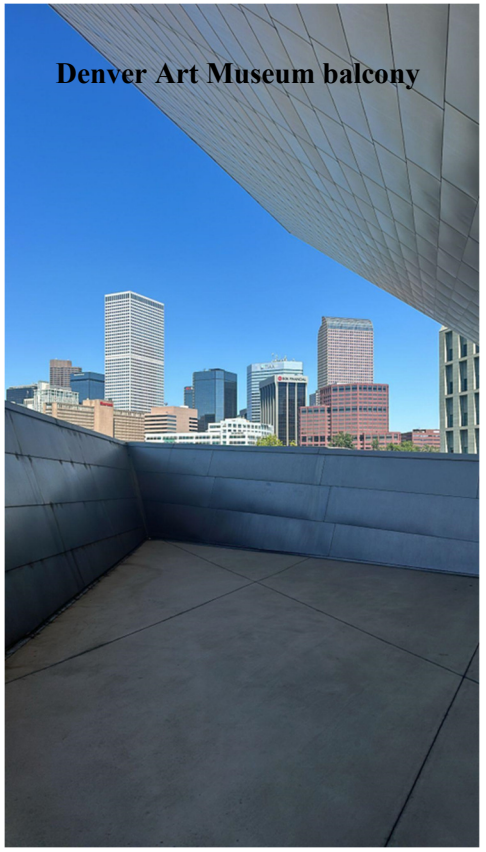
After our site visit, we ventured to two newly constructed buildings in Denver designed by acclaimed architects. We first explored the Populus Hotel, the first carbon-positive building in the U.S. by Studio Gang. I admired unique details, like the walk-up coffee shop window, and learned about the city's focus on walkability. Our next stop was One River North, designed by MAD Architects, located in an emerging [is it new, or revitalized?] part of Denver that draws in young people. Experiencing it firsthand was captivating after only seeing photographs. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Liz O'Sullivan for being present with me through visiting the site and buildings; the knowledge I gained will significantly aid my project work and architectural journey. Thank you, Liz, for your teachings during my time in Denver!

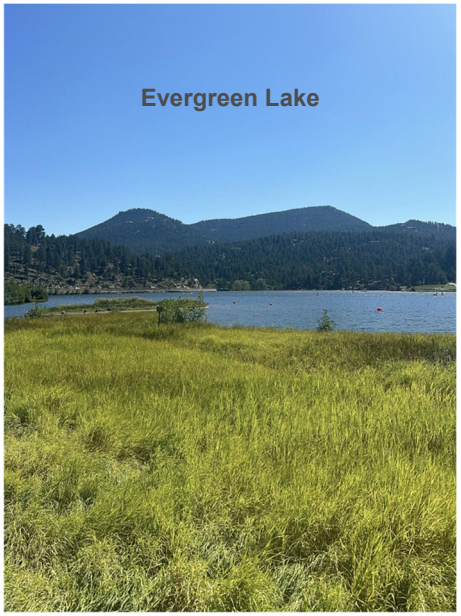
On my final day, Erica and I embarked on an exploration of Denver. Our first destination was Red Rocks, where I beheld the breathtaking amphitheater framed by the landscape. Next, we traveled to Evergreen, a small town nearby, to see Evergreen Lake. Erica shared that in winter, the lake freezes, becoming a playground for skating and hockey. This was truly one of the most beautiful spots I've encountered. Our last stop was the Denver Art Museum, where the architecture by Daniel Libeskind left a lasting impression, complemented by excellent exhibits. A balcony offered stunning views of downtown, showcasing designs by renowned architects such as ZGF and Michael Graves.

When it was time to return to the airport, I reflected on this incredible journey. This trip became an unforgettable experience rooted in gratitude for everyone associated with the Denver CSI Chapter. Special thanks go to Athena van Waardenburg for connecting with Erica Thompson. Erica was my personal tour guide and a pivotal force in making this trip a reality—thank you. Finally, thank you, Liz O'Sullivan, for joining me at the project site and during our explorations of those iconic buildings; the knowledge you provided will play a significant and lasting role in growing my architecture career. This trip will forever resonate with me, reminding me how a simple email blossomed into a life-changing experience.


Populus Hotel


Red Rocks


Denver Art Museum balcony


Evergreen Lake

Seals and Signatures Evidence of Responsible Charge by Design Professionals Part 3 – Statutory Requirements Concerning Sealing and Signing of Documents

By: Kevin O'Beirne, PE, FCSI, CCS, CCCA, CDT

This is the third in a four-part series on this blog addressing sealing and signing of instruments of service by design professionals, comprised of: (a) Part 1 – Definition and Purpose of Seals; (b) Part 2 – Electronic Seals and Signatures; (c) Part 3 – Statutory Requirements Concerning Sealing and Signing of Documents; and (d) Part 4 – Practical Considerations Concerning Sealing and Signing.

It is not always clear to everyone employed in the design professions exactly what types of instruments of service and other documents should be sealed and signed, and when. Laws and regulations governing the design professions for a given jurisdiction address such matters and should always be complied with. Statutory requirements concerning this matter can and do vary from state to state. Thus, it is incumbent on each individual licensee to understand and comply with the applicable laws and regulations. This article addresses common requirements in the United States concerning when, and for which documents, sealing, and signing are necessary.

Terms such as, "'[architect] [engineer] of record" and "'[architect] [engineer] -in-responsible-control" are typically construed as having the same meaning as, "'[architect] [engineer] -in-responsible-charge". In many organizations, the terms are used interchangeably for a given design discipline. For convenience and uniformity, the term "responsible charge" is used in this article. Also, in this article, laws, rules, and regulations are referenced as either "laws and regulations" or "statutory requirements". Furthermore, the term "instruments of service" means the collection of documents, drawings, specifications, calculations, and other tangible materials produced by design professionals during the various stages of a project. (Source: Understanding Instruments of Service (aiacontracts.com))

Model Laws and Regulations

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) publishes model statutory language governing the practice of architecture in the United States. Section 401 of NCARB Model Laws and Regulations states in part:

"2) All Technical Submissions prepared under the Responsible Control of the Architect required by public authorities having jurisdiction for Building permits or regulatory approvals shall be sealed and signed by the Architect. By sealing a Technical Submission, the Architect represents that the Architect was in Responsible Control over the content of such Technical Submissions during its preparation and has applied the required professional standard of care.

"3) The public authorities having jurisdiction and charged with the administration and enforcement of adopted codes shall accept or approve Technical Submissions involving the Practice of Architecture only if the Technical Submissions have been sealed as required by this Act. A Building permit issued for a Technical Submission that does not conform with the requirements of this Act shall be invalid."

Section R401.0 of NCARB's Model Regulations states in part:

"R401.0 Design and Use of Architect's Seal…

"2) As required by Section 401 of the Act, the seal must appear on all Technical Submissions prepared under the Responsible Control of the Architect, including, but not limited to, each drawing sheet and the specifications cover. Such seal and signature may be electronic."

Section R401 of NCARB's Model Regulations further indicates the types of documents that must be sealed and signed and restricts the licensee from sealing and signing instruments of service not prepared under their responsible charge.

Section 401 of NCARB's Model Laws and Regulations requires the architect to seal and sign "All Technical Submissions… required by public authorities having jurisdiction for Building permits or regulatory approvals". Section R401 includes similar language and further clarifies that documents to be sealed and signed include, "each drawing sheet and the specifications cover". NCARB's Model Laws and Regulations do not, however, require that drawings and specifications issued for bidding/procurement and construction be sealed and signed. Of course, authorities having jurisdiction, such as the applicable building code official, will require that the drawings and specifications used for construction be consistent with those submitted as part of the associated permit application, and such officials may even insist that drawings and specifications used in construction also be sealed and signed. In this writer's experience, drawings and specifications issued for bidding/procurement and construction are typically sealed and signed. Laws and regulations governing the practice of the design professions in many jurisdictions vary somewhat from NCARB's Model Laws and Regulations and may expressly require sealing and signing for bidding/procurement or construction, in addition to when such documents are submitted to obtain required permits.

Similarly, the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) publishes suggested language for state and territorial laws and regulations governing the practice of professional engineering and land surveying in the United States. Section 240.20 of NCEES's Model Rules (revised August 2022) states, in part:

"240.20 Seal on Documents

"A. The seal and signature of the licensee and the date of signing shall be placed on all final engineering specifications, reports, drawings, plans, design information, and calculations or surveys, reports, plats, drawings, plans, and calculations whenever presented to a client or any public agency to certify that the work thereon was done by the licensee or under the responsible charge of the licensee. Working drawings or preliminary documents are not required to have a seal and signature if the working drawing or preliminary document contains a statement in large bold letters to the effect "PRELIMINARY, NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION, RECORDING PURPOSES, OR IMPLEMENTATION."

"B. The seal and signature shall be placed on all original copy, tracings, or other reproducible documents so that the seal and signature will be reproduced when copies are made.

"C. When the document contains more than one sheet, the first or title page shall be sealed and signed by the licensee who was in responsible charge. Two or more licensees may affix their signatures and seals provided that a note under the seal designates the specific subject matter for which each is responsible. In addition, each sheet shall be sealed and signed by the licensee or licensees responsible for that sheet. When a firm performs the work, each sheet shall be sealed and signed by the licensee or licensees who were in responsible charge of that sheet…"

Section 240.20.A of NCEES's Model Rules requires that professional engineers seal and sign their instruments of service, "whenever presented to a client or any public agency", except that "working documents" (likely referring to preliminary submittals not yet ready for permitting and construction) need not be sealed and signed so long as they are properly indicated as "not for construction" or similar, appropriate language. Thus, NCEES's Model Rules appear to require a somewhat greater extent of sealing and signing compared with NCARB's Model Laws and Regulations, which require sealing and signing only when "All Technical Submissions… required by public authorities having jurisdiction for Building permits or regulatory approvals" are furnished.

Section 240.20 of NCEES's Model Rules also includes, in its Subparagraphs D through G, requirements restricting professional engineers and land surveyors from sealing and signing instruments of service not prepared under their responsible charge.

General Considerations

Statutory requirements concerning what documents must be sealed and signed, and when sealing and signing is required, may vary by jurisdiction. In this writer's experience, design professionals most often seal and sign instruments of service submitted to authorities having jurisdiction, those used for bidding/procurement, and those used for construction. Typically, all are often the same set of documents, however, some potential exists that there may be some variation between sets of documents prepared for each of these different purposes.

Even when applicable laws and regulations do not expressly require that drawings and specifications used for construction be sealed and signed, it may be difficult to envision a local building inspector, or other representative of an authority having jurisdiction, visiting the construction site for an inspection, requesting to see the drawings and specifications, and not reacting somewhat adversely upon finding the drawings and specifications lacking the design professional's seal and signature. Therefore, even when not expressly required by laws and regulations, it is typically appropriate to seal and sign drawings and specifications used for bidding/procurement and construction.

Some examples illustrate the differences between jurisdictions in the United States:

Example 1 – New York

Paragraph 1 of Section 7209 of the New York State Education Law, relative to professional engineering, land surveying, and professional geology, requires, "All plans, specifications, plats and reports relating to the construction or alteration of buildings or structures, or geologic drawings and reports prepared by such professional engineer… or by a full-time or part-time subordinate under his or her supervision, shall be stamped with such seal and shall also be signed, on the original with the personal signature of such professional engineer…when filed with public officials."

Interestingly, the statute quoted in part, above, does not require sealing and signing of engineering calculations.

Similarly, Paragraph 1 of Section 7307 of the New York State Education Law, relative to architecture, requires, "All working drawings and specifications, prepared by such architect or by a full-time or part-time subordinate employed under his supervision, shall be stamped with such seal and shall also be signed on the original with the personal signature of such architect when filed with public officials." Although the meaning of, "when filed with public officials" may not be as clear as desired, it most likely refers to submittals for applications for permits and approvals required for construction, although it may also indicate that sealing and signing is required for drawings, specifications, and reports constituting the practice of architecture, engineering, or geology when delivered to a public client.

Example 2 – Pennsylvania

Section 37.1 of Title 49, Chapter 37 of the Pennsylvania Code, addressing the State Registration Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors and Geologists, defines documents that require sealing and signing as follows:

“Documents—Specifications, land surveys, reports, plats, drawings, plans, design information, and calculations.”

Furthermore, Section 37.59 of the same statute states in part:

“(2) When a registrant issues final or complete documents to a client for the client’s records, or when a registrant submits final or complete documents to public or governmental agencies for final review, the seal and signature of the registrant who prepared or who directed and controlled the preparation of the documents, along with the date of issuance, shall be prominently displayed on the first page of all documents. The seal on the first page of a final or complete document shall be impressed, stamped or digital. Facsimile or digital seals shall appear on all subsequent pages of plans or plats

“(3) When multiple registrants prepare or direct and control the preparation of documents, each registrant’s seal and signature shall appear on the first page of the documents, or on the first page of the identifiable portion or section of the documents, which were prepared or directed and controlled by that registrant, if the respective registrants’ direction and control can be reasonably segregated.”

Section 9.140 of Title 49, Chapter 9 of the Pennsylvania Code, pertaining to the State Architects Licensure Board, defines the types of documents requiring sealing and signing as follows:

“Architectural documents—Drawings, specifications, and other design documents.”

Section 9.141 of the same statute includes language virtually identical to Section 37.59, pertaining to engineering, land surveying, and geology, with the notable exception that Section 37.59 requires a seal and signature on each drawing or plat, whereas Section 9.141, relative to architecture, requires: “Facsimile or digital seals shall appear on all subsequent pages of architectural documents.” It is unclear whether this literally requires an architect’s seal, without a signature, to appear on each page of specifications, reports, or other technical submittals.

Example 3 – California

In California, Section 6735 of the Professional Engineers Act (Business and Professions Code §§ 6700 – 6799), Effective January 1, 2023, Chapter 7 - Professional Engineers, presents relatively clear language concerning the documents that must be sealed and signed, and when sealing and signing is required. It states in part:

“(a) All civil (including structural and geotechnical) engineering plans, calculations, specifications, and reports (hereinafter referred to as "documents") shall be prepared by, or under the responsible charge of, a licensed civil engineer and shall include his or her name and license number. Interim documents shall include a notation as to the intended purpose of the document, such as "preliminary," "not for construction," "for plan check only," or "for review only." All civil engineering plans and specifications that are permitted or that are to be released for construction shall bear the signature and seal or stamp of the licensee and the date of signing and sealing or stamping. All final civil engineering calculations and reports shall bear the signature and seal or stamp of the licensee, and the date of signing and sealing or stamping. If civil engineering plans are required to be signed and sealed or stamped and have multiple sheets, the signature, seal or stamp, and date of signing and sealing or stamping, shall appear on each sheet of the plans. If civil engineering specifications, calculations, and reports are required to be signed and sealed or stamped and have multiple pages, the signature, seal or stamp, and date of signing and sealing or stamping shall appear at a minimum on the title sheet, cover sheet, or signature sheet.”

Similar requirements apply to other engineering disciplines in California. In summary, in California, all the engineer's instruments of service must bear the name and license number of the individual serving in responsible charge, regardless of whether such documents are considered "final" or for permitting and construction. Interim documents, such as drafts, preliminary documents, work-in-progress documents, or building department review documents, need not be sealed or signed, but must expressly indicate they are preliminary or not for construction. Professional engineers are required to seal, sign, and date drawings and specifications required for permitting and construction, and final calculations and reports, regardless of whether such calculations and reports are submitted to any external entity. A local governmental entity may adopt ordinances or regulations requiring that all engineering documents submitted for review be signed and sealed. However, interim documents, even if signed and sealed, must still contain the interim notation as required by state law.

In California, the Architects Practice Act, January 1, 2024, is less clear than its engineering counterpart, excerpted above. The Architecture Practice Act requires the sealing and signing of various types of instruments of service but does not expressly indicate when sealing and signing is necessary. Perhaps sealing and signing of all such instruments of service, regardless of whether they are interim (preliminary) or final, may be intended. Interestingly, the Act also requires that contracts for architectural services be signed only by the person serving in responsible charge. Specifically, Section 1536.1 states in part:

"(a) All persons preparing or being in responsible control of plans, specifications, and instruments of service for others shall sign those plans, specifications, and instruments of service and all contracts therefor, and if licensed under this chapter shall affix a stamp, which complies with subdivision (b), to those plans, specifications, and instruments of service, as evidence of the person's responsibility for those documents."

Section 136.(c) of the California Architect's Practice Act stipulates requirements for architecture seals and stamps and, among other things, requires explicit indication, either as part of the stamp or written adjacent to it, notation of the license expiration date.

In the absence of reasonably available guidance concerning statutory requirements for California architects, it is possible that many architects working on California projects seal and sign drawings and specifications primarily for submittal to authorities having jurisdiction, and for construction. While it appears to apply only to instruments of service prepared for buildings owned by the State of California and public school projects with state funding, the document, "Design Professional's Signature and Seal (Stamp) On Construction Documents", by the Division of the State Architect of California, presents requirements for sealing and signing that are somewhat more clear than the statutory language of the California Architect's Practice Act.

Evaluation

As demonstrated by the examples above, statutory requirements can have significant variations from one jurisdiction to the next. Practitioners, especially licensees serving in responsible charge, should be familiar with, and comply with, laws and regulations governing the practice of their profession in all jurisdictions where they are licensed. A convenient, although not necessarily comprehensive, resource is the 50□State Survey of Licensed Design Professional's Stamping and Sealing Obligations, by the American Bar Association Forum on Construction Law, Division 3 – Design.

As indicated in the examples above, seals applied to instruments of service typically must be accompanied by the licensee's signature. Signatures can usually be applied either directly adjacent to the seal or across part of the seal, so long as the signature does not obscure or render illegible, the licensee's name, license number, state of licensure, and type of license. Many jurisdictions' laws and regulations also require indicating the date of sealing and signing adjacent to the seal and signature. Statutory requirements for certain design professions in some states further require indicating when the license or registration (as applicable) expires.

Conclusions

Exactly which documents must be sealed and signed by the design professional in responsible charge can vary by jurisdiction, as can the time at which sealing and signing is required. In most jurisdictions, sealing and signing of instruments of service such as construction drawings, specifications, calculations, and reports of a technical nature constituting the statutory definition of the practice of engineering, architecture, geology, or other licensed design profession, must be sealed and signed at the time such items are submitted for permitting and approvals by authorities having jurisdiction. However, laws and regulations in some jurisdictions may include requirements for sealing and signing of documents for other purposes, especially construction. Licensees should be aware of and comply with statutory requirements in effect in the areas where their projects are located.

Kevin O'Beirne, PE, FCSI, CCS, CCCA is a professional engineer licensed in NY and PA with over 35 years of experience designing and constructing water and wastewater infrastructure for public and private clients. He is the engineering specifications manager for a global engineering and architecture design firm. He has been a member of various CSI national committees and is the certification chair of CSI's Buffalo-Western New York Chapter. He is an ACEC voting delegate in the Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee (EJCDC) and lives and works in the Buffalo NY area. Kevin O'Beirne's LinkedIn page

Wordless Wednesday: Say CHEEEEESE!

By: Lori Greene, I Dig Hardware Blog

Jeff Hoyt of Cheney Door Company sent me today's Wordless Wednesday photos, taken in a retail store specializing in fancy cheeses. Cheese is one of my favorite things (my friend gave me a cheese Advent calendar this year!), but the manager of this store needs to focus a bit more on their means of egress!

Wordless Wednesday: Hostile Architecture !

By: Lori Greene, I Dig Hardware Blog

Today's Wordless Wednesday photo illustrates a measure taken by a high-rise hotel to deter houseless people from accessing the alcoves at the secondary entrances. Lisa Goodwin Robbins of Kalin Associates sent me the photo, and as she said, "This is wrong on so many levels." Although the gate appears to have panic hardware, it does not meet the distance requirements for doors in a series.

If you're not familiar with hostile architecture, you can read about it in this article in the Urbanist (https://www.theurbanist.org/2023/12/11/urbanism-101-hostile-architecture/), and see more examples and links to additional information on this Wikipedia page (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hostile_architecture).

Fixed-It Friday: Stile Width Modification

By: Lori Greene, I Dig Hardware Blog

If only I had a nickel for every time I've recommended wide stile aluminum doors on a project…I'd have so many nickels!! I'm seeing wider stiles now, because of the accessibility requirement for a minimum 10-inch bottom rail (measured up from the floor), but there many existing narrow stile and medium stile doors out there.

I saw the door in today's Fixed-it Friday photo on a university campus recently. The "fix" would probably make the architect cry, but this is VERY common. Many universities and other types of facilities have standardized on a particular hardware application and/or product. If their hardware of choice does not fit on a narrow or wide stile door, they often make it work.

In this case, the university has added plates to accommodate Von Duprin 99 Series rim devices with a removable mullion. It would have saved some time, expense, and architects' tears to specify wide stile doors from the get-go.

What's that? Strike Hook

By: Lori Greene, I Dig Hardware Blog

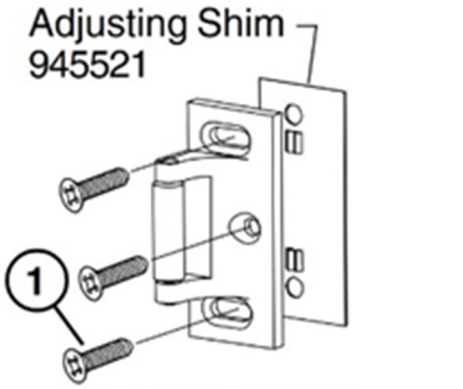
Last week I shared a "What's that?" post about an LCN CUSH shoe support, and my friend Lloyd Seliber requested a post about the Von Duprin strike hook. Yes – I do take requests!

This is a great topic for a post, because it's a common problem I see in the field – the incorrect strike installed, or the strike hook missing. The strike hook is part of the assembly for the 499F strike. One of the common applications for this strike assembly is with the Von Duprin 9927-F surface vertical rod fire exit hardware when it is installed less bottom rod (LBR). This strike is also used with some removable mullion applications.

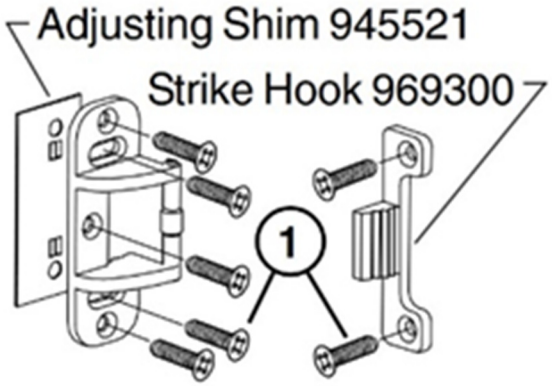
The strike hook is installed on the face of the door, and inserts into the strike when the door closes. The purpose is to help keep the door and hardware properly aligned and latched during a fire test (and during a fire). If the 499F strike assembly is required by our listings for a particular application, and the correct strike and strike hook are not installed, the fire door assembly may not perform as designed and tested during a fire.

One of the common field issues I see is existing surface vertical rod fire exit hardware that has been modified to remove the bottom rods and latches for a less bottom rod (LBR) application. This change will typically require the addition of an auxiliary fire pin, AND changing the strikes from the original 299F strikes to 499F strikes. The installation instructions for the auxiliary fire pin show this change to the strikes.

The strike on the left below is the standard 299F strike that would be installed with 9927-F fire exit hardware with top and bottom rods and latches, and the strike on the right is the 499F strike with the strike hook that would be installed with the less bottom rod (LBR) application.



299F (Top) Strike - Single or Double Door Fire Exit Hardware



499F (Top) Strike - Supplied with LBR Fire Latch/Strike Kit

Tis the season for code violations!

By: Mark Kuhn, IDig Hardware Blog

If you're anything like me, you find yourself shopping in some unique shops at this time of year. I know that you're a lot like me because these "Christmas shops" are very CROWDED!

Naturally when I find myself in places like this, I immediately check out all the egress paths. I must admit that when I find these great illustrations of code violations, I am filled with mixed feelings. It starts with excitement because I've found something to write about and quickly moves to frustration because people are ignorant to the violations and that they are not being enforced.

This is a very common violation seen on entry doors in these types of shops. I'm going to point out a couple of problems with this opening.

1) The One-Motion Rule: The I-Codes tell us that any door required for egress shall not require more than one releasing motion in a singular linear or rotational direction to unlatch ALL latching and locking devices. There is a latchset and a separate deadbolt on this door, requiring two releasing motions for egress.

2) The inactive leaf was secured with manual flush bolts. This can be done in certain situations and in certain occupancies with specific occupant loads…this building met none of those requirements.

But this was just the entry door. So I decided as we shopped, that I would check out all of the other exit doors…BTW, this store is a very large store with many rooms and spread over a couple of floors. In this article you will see EVERY door with an "exit" sign.

This next illustration is actually two stacked "exit" doors, each with several problems, but the most glaring to me is that they are swinging in the wrong direction. The I-Codes tell us that doors must swing in the direction of egress when serving a room or area with a calculated occupant load of 50 people or more. The occupant load of this store was well over that. But like I said, there other problems like ADA compliance, two motions for egress, and it sure looks like someone is going to fill-up the wire with bows, which would hide the door altogether. The second photo below is the next door in the means of egress.

But wait there's more!!!! (you need to keep the egress path clear)

And I saved the best (or worst) for last! …WOW!!!

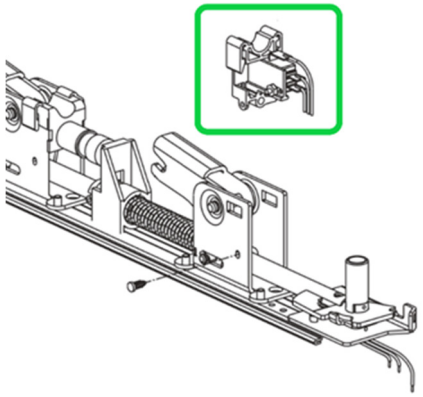
The point of a post like this is not to pick on a certain shop, but rather to make everyone aware and knowledgeable of these types of problems. Like I said, this place is not unique. I'm sure that if all of you paid as much attention to these things as I do, we could fill Lori's inbox with hundreds of similar illustrations.

Before you ask…I did not talk to anyone at the store. I thought about it, but when I saw how super-busy they were and that I didn't know anyone who worked there, and how it would come across if someone with no authority (other than their knowledge of egress code) talked to them about the problems, I decided against it.

RX Switches – What are they for?

By: Mark Kuhn, IDig Hardware Blog

In his latest post, Mark Kuhn addresses a common question that comes up during code review…What's the purpose of an RX switch in the door-mounted hardware?



I'm writing today about an often-misunderstood piece of electronic hardware…the request-to-exit switch, commonly called an "RX" switch. For the purposes of today's post, I'm talking about an RX switch that is inside of the hardware that is mounted on the door.

Now before I dive into this post, I know that RX switches in the door hardware have many uses and there are some cases where the RX switch is part of a "special locking arrangement." Some of those examples are:

Door hardware release of electrically locked egress doors, where an RX switch built into a lock, sensor bar, or panic hardware releases an electromagnetic lock.

Delayed egress locks, where an RX switch built into a lock or panic can send a signal to a relay controlling the delayed unlocking of a mag-lock.

When used in the situations listed above, the RX switch does play a part in ensuring code-compliant egress.

Note: There are also sensors and push buttons that are sometimes referred to as REX sensors or REX switches, as they facilitate egress. But as I mentioned before, this post specifically addresses RX switches inside of the door-mounted hardware.

An RX switch can also be used to turn pieces of hardware on and off. The most common example of this is when a door has an automatic operator. An RX switch in a panic device can be used to activate and deactivate the actuators for the auto operator. Dogging the panic hardware closes the contact of the RX switch inside, turning on the actuator buttons that control the operator. When the panic is undogged, the actuators are no longer active, which prevents the auto operator from trying to open the door when the door is latched and unable to open automatically.

You get the idea; the RX switch has a lot of uses. However, we often have questions about RX switches during the code review process, even when the switch has no impact on a building occupant's ability to exit. The reason the switch may be flagged during code review is because the reviewer believes that the switch is used with hardware that may impact egress.

The fact of the matter is, most of the time the RX switch is just there to monitor the opening, not to control the opening. These doors would fall under what Lori refers to as "normal locking arrangements." The hardware in question would still always allow free egress. But the notes we receive from the plan reviewers usually reference the "Unlatching" section of I-codes, "egress shall require not more than one motion…" or they may reference the "Door Operations" section, "egress doors shall be easily openable from the egress side without key or special knowledge or effort…"

So, what is the purpose of the RX switch in a normal locking arrangement? Good question! The RX switch may be part of the detection system that monitors the egress side of the opening and alerts the system of an "authorized exit." This means that a person has approached the door from the inside to exit through the door, and the door was not forced open from the outside (or secure side).

The RX switch works together with a door position switch (DPS). If the DPS shows that the door has opened, and the access control system has not received a signal from the RX switch, it assumes that the door has been forced open. This may cause an alarm to sound, or may send a signal to security personnel. If the system receives a signal from both the RX switch and the DPS switch, then it recognizes an authorized egress, also known as a "legal release."

I know that the comments will probably be filled with MANY other uses for an RX switch, but I've tried to hit the highlights. I hope I've done an adequate job of explaining some of the uses for this small but important part of an electronic access control system and give us a better understanding of the request-to-exit switch.

And to help clarify the code requirements for systems that include an RX switch for monitoring the use of a door, a section was added to the 2021 I-Codes and revised in the 2024 editions:

1010.2.9 Monitored or recorded egress, and access control systems. Where electrical systems that monitor or record egress activity are incorporated, or where the door has an access control system, the locking system on the egress side of the door shall comply with Section 1010.2.10, 1010.2.11, 1010.2.12, 1010.2.13, 1010.2.14 or 1010.2.15 or shall be readily openable from the egress side without the use of a key or special knowledge or effort.

This section clearly states that a door is permitted to have electrified hardware with an RX switch monitoring egress, or an access control system limiting access. These doors must either be readily openable from the egress side, or they must comply with one of the code sections addressing special locking arrangements.

Key Sustainability Features Architects Look for in Building Materials

By: Ron Blank, Ron Blank and Associates

Sustainability has become a driving force in the construction industry, influencing everything from design decisions to material selection. As environmental concerns continue to grow, Design Professionals are increasingly prioritizing products that contribute to sustainable building practices.

Regulatory Drivers: Codes, Standards, and Mandates

Governments and regulatory bodies around the world are implementing stricter codes and standards to reduce the environmental impact of buildings. These regulations often mandate the use of energy-efficient, low-emission, and recyclable materials.

Examples of Regulatory Drivers:

- Energy Codes: Many regions have energy codes that require buildings to meet certain energy efficiency standards, influencing the selection of insulation, windows, and HVAC systems.
- Building Certification Programs: Programs like LEED and the WELL Building Standard often set higher benchmarks for sustainability, encouraging the use of certified products that contribute to achieving these standards.

Market Drivers: Client Expectations and Public Perception

Beyond regulatory requirements, market forces are also driving the adoption of sustainable building products. Clients are increasingly demanding environmentally friendly buildings, both to reduce operating costs and to meet corporate sustainability goals.

Influence of Public Perception:

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Companies are looking to align their building projects with their CSR goals, which often include commitments to sustainability and reducing carbon footprints.
- **Occupant Health and Wellness:** There is growing awareness of how building materials can affect indoor air quality and occupant health, leading to increased demand for low-VOC and non-toxic products.

Understanding LEED and Other Certifications

Building certifications play a significant role in driving the selection of sustainable products. Understanding these certifications and how your products can contribute to achieving them is crucial for positioning your products in the market.

LEED, WELL, Living Building Challenge, and Beyond

Each certification program has its own set of criteria and focus areas. For example:

- **LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design):** Focuses on a wide range of sustainability factors, including energy efficiency, water use, and indoor environmental quality.
- **WELL Building Standard:** Emphasizes human health and wellness, with a focus on air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort, and mind.
- **Living Building Challenge:** A more rigorous certification that aims to create buildings that are net-positive for the environment, requiring products that are free of harmful chemicals and have a minimal environmental footprint.

How Certifications Influence Product Selection:

- **Point Contribution:** Many products contribute points toward certifications like LEED, which can be a deciding factor for Design Professionals aiming to achieve a specific certification level.
- **Transparency Requirements:** Certifications often require transparency about the ingredients and environmental impacts of products, driving demand forHealth Product Declarations (HPDs) and other documentation.

Strategies for Positioning Sustainable Products

To effectively position your products as sustainable choices, you need to go beyond simply stating that they are “green.” You must demonstrate how they meet or exceed the criteria set by certification programs and provide tangible benefits to the project.

Crafting an Effective Sustainability Narrative

Your sustainability narrative should clearly articulate how your product contributes to the project’s environmental and health goals. This narrative should be backed by data and certifications.

Key Elements of a Sustainability Narrative:

- **Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs):** EPDs offer third-party verified information about a product’s environmental impact, making them a valuable tool for building credibility.
- **Health Product Declarations (HPDs):** The HPD provides a standardized way of reporting the material contents of building products, and the health effects associated with these materials. Approved HPD Preparers like Elixir Environmental can help manufacturers develop these sustainability documents.
- **Recyclability and Reusability:** Highlight how your product can be recycled or reused at the end of its life, reducing waste and contributing to a circular economy.

Using Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs)

EPDs and LCAs are increasingly required in sustainable building projects. They provide transparent and comparable data about the environmental impacts of products, helping Design Professionals make informed decisions.

How to Utilize EPDs and LCAs:

In Proposals: Include EPDs and LCA data in your product proposals to provide evidence of your product's sustainability**.**

In Marketing: Use EPDs and LCAs as key selling points in your marketing materials and AIA CE courses emphasizing how your product helps projects meet sustainability goals.

Avoiding Greenwashing: Ensuring Honest Marketing

Greenwashing—making exaggerated or misleading claims about the environmental benefits of a product—can damage your credibility and lead to legal consequences. It's essential to market your products honestly and transparently.

Ethical Considerations in Sustainability Marketing

Ethical marketing involves being truthful about what your product can and cannot do. It's important to avoid overstatements and ensure that any sustainability claims are backed by credible evidence.

Principles of Ethical Sustainability Marketing:

Transparency: Be open about the limitations of your product as well as its benefits.

Accuracy: Ensure that all claims are supported by data, certifications, and third-party endorsements.

Responsibility: Understand the broader impact of your marketing efforts on the environment and society.

Case Studies of Effective and Misleading Marketing Campaigns

Effective Campaigns: Successful campaigns often focus on specific, verifiable benefits rather than broad, unsubstantiated claims. For example, a campaign that highlights a product's contribution to LEED points, supported by EPDs, HPDs, and case studies, is likely to be well-received.

Misleading Campaigns: Campaigns that exaggerate environmental benefits or use vague language (e.g., "eco-friendly" without clarification) can lead to backlash. Case studies of companies that faced legal action or reputational damage due to greenwashing serve as cautionary tales.

President of Ron Blank & Associates | Author of "The SPEC SHAMAN- How to Get Your Building Products Specified"

Providing Meaningful Assistance: The Stages of Architectural Specifications

By: Ron Blank and Laura Elliott, Ron Blank and Associates

Developing architectural specifications is a critical component of the construction process, supporting efforts that all materials and products meet the design and regulatory requirements. For building product representatives, understanding each stage of this process and knowing what is expected can significantly enhance their chances of having their products specified. This article discusses the stages of architectural specifications and outlines what building product representatives need to provide at each stage to support design professionals effectively.

Stage 1: Schematic Design (SD)

The Schematic Design stage is where the initial concepts of the project are developed. Architects focus on the overall layout, spatial relationships, and basic forms of the building. At this stage, preliminary decisions about building materials and systems begin to take shape, though detailed specifications are not yet required.

Expectations from Building Product Representatives

1. Introduction to Products: At this early stage, product representatives should introduce their product lines to the design professionals. This includes providing an overview of key features, benefits, and potential applications of the products. The goal is to make the design professionals aware of the products that could be considered for the project.

2. Initial Consultation: Engage in discussions with design professionals to understand their design vision and project requirements. This allows product reps to suggest products that align with the project's goals and constraints.

3. Provide Basic Product Literature: Supply brochures, catalogs, and initial product data sheets. These materials should give a broad overview of the products, highlighting unique selling points and potential uses in the project.

4. Sustainability Information: Given the increasing importance of sustainability in construction, provide information on the environmental benefits of your products. This includes details on LEED compatibility, environmental certifications, and sustainable manufacturing practices.

Stage 2: Design Development (DD)

During the Design Development stage, the initial design concepts are refined into more detailed plans. This stage involves making specific decisions about materials, systems, and products. Detailed drawings and specifications begin to take form, requiring more precise information from product representatives.

Expectations from Building Product Representatives

1. Detailed Product Information: Provide comprehensive technical data sheets, performance data, and installation guides. This detailed information helps design professionals understand the capabilities and limitations of the products, enabling them to make informed decisions.

2. Samples and Mock-Ups: Supply physical samples and mock-ups of your products. These allow architects to evaluate the appearance, texture, and compatibility of the products with other materials in the project. Mock-ups can also demonstrate how products will look and perform in a real-world setting.

3. Technical Support: Offer technical assistance to address specific questions about product performance, compatibility, and installation. This support can involve providing detailed explanations, calculations, and comparisons with alternative products.

4. Compliance Information: Ensure that architects have access to relevant compliance documentation. This includes fire ratings, structural certifications, environmental data, and any other regulatory requirements that your products meet.

Stage 3: Construction Documents (CD)

The Construction Documents stage is where the design is finalized, and detailed drawings and specifications are prepared. These documents are essential for bidding, permitting, and construction. Specifications at this stage are highly detailed, leaving no ambiguity about the materials and methods to be used.

Expectations from Building Product Representatives

1. 3-Part CSI Specifications: Provide detailed, project-specific 3-part CSI (Construction Specifications Institute) specifications, which include:

- Part 1: General – Administrative and procedural requirements related to the product.
- Part 2: Products – Detailed descriptions of the products, including performance criteria, quality standards, and technical specifications.
- Part 3: Execution – Guidelines for the proper installation and application of the products, including quality control measures.

2. BIM Objects and CAD Files: Supply Building Information Modeling (BIM) objects and Computer-Aided Design (CAD) files to integrate your products into the architectural drawings. These digital resources help architects visualize and plan the incorporation of your products into the design.

3. Technical Presentations: Conduct in-depth technical presentations or lunch-and-learn sessions to educate the design team about your products. These sessions should cover product features, benefits, installation procedures, and compliance information.

4. Support with Code Compliance: Provide documentation and support to demonstrate that your products comply with relevant building codes and standards. This ensures that the specified products meet all legal and safety requirements.

Stage 4: Bidding and Negotiation

In the Bidding and Negotiation stage, the construction documents are used to solicit bids from contractors. The goal is to obtain competitive pricing and select a contractor who can deliver the project within the specified budget and timeline. This stage involves clarifying any ambiguities in the specifications and ensuring that all parties understand the project requirements.

Expectations from Building Product Representatives

1. Clarification and Support: Be available to answer questions from architects, contractors, and bidders regarding your products. Clarify any ambiguities in the specifications and provide additional information as needed.

2. Pricing Information: Offer accurate and competitive pricing for your products. Ensure that your pricing aligns with the project's budget and provide detailed cost breakdowns if necessary.

3. Alternative Solutions: If there are concerns about cost or availability, propose alternative products or solutions that meet the project requirements. Be prepared to justify why your alternatives are suitable.

4. Lead Times and Availability: Provide clear information about product availability and lead times. Ensure that the design professionals and contractors are aware of any potential delays and suggest strategies to mitigate these risks.

Stage 5: Construction Administration (CA)

During the Construction Administration stage, the focus shifts to ensuring that the project is built according to the specifications and drawings. This involves site visits, inspections, and addressing any issues that arise during construction.

Expectations from Building Product Representatives

1. On-Site Support: Provide on-site technical support and guidance to ensure correct product installation. This may involve training sessions, site visits, and direct consultation with installers and contractors.

2. Troubleshooting: Assist in resolving any issues related to your products during construction. Be responsive to any problems or concerns that arise and provide prompt solutions.

3. Installation Training: Offer training sessions for contractors and installers to ensure proper handling and installation of your products. This can prevent common installation errors and ensure optimal product performance.

4. Warranty and Maintenance Information: Provide detailed warranty information and maintenance guidelines. Ensure that the construction team and the building owner understand the maintenance requirements and coverage terms of your products.

Wrap Up

Building product representatives are integral throughout the architectural specification process. By providing timely, accurate, and comprehensive information and support, they can significantly influence the success of a project. Understanding the expectations at each stage of the design and construction process allows product reps to better serve design professionals, elevating the likelihood of product specification. This collaboration helps achieve project goals while building lasting relationships with design professionals, that ultimately contribute to the success and reputation of the building product manufacturer.

President of Ron Blank & Associates | Author of "The SPEC SHAMAN- How to Get Your Building Products Specified"

Laura Elliott, M.S.Ed
Ron Blank & Associates, Inc.

As Editorial Director, Laura Elliott curates and oversees the creative direction of written content, ensuring a harmonious blend of style and substance. A champion of the industries at the heart of the built environment, she enjoys crafting compelling narratives that move those industries forward. Her commitment to spearheading precision, integrity and authenticity fuels a dynamic collection of memorable content that fosters the connection between ideas and expression.

Quick Question: Access-Controlled Egress Doors

By: Lori Greene, I Dig Hardware Blog

I was recently teaching a class for a group of fire inspectors and this Quick Question came up:

Are access-controlled egress doors no longer allowed by the model codes?

If I had to name the one code section that has caused me the most pain and suffering during my career, this section would be the one. I still vividly remember sitting with the members of a state building code board and confidently explaining the meaning of the section, then walking out of the room in defeat when I was unable to convince them of the intent of the code. I'm going to guess that was close to 15 years ago, and I have dedicated countless hours to unraveling misinterpretations of the section since then.

The fire inspectors in my class were enforcing an adopted state fire code based on the 2015 edition of NFPA 101 – Life Safety Code. In this edition, there is a section called Access-Controlled Egress Door Assemblies, and in the 2012 edition of the I-Codes, there was a very similar section called Access-Controlled Egress Doors. If you look for these sections in the subsequent editions of the model codes, they seem to have disappeared. This led some of the code officials in my session to think that access-controlled egress doors would no longer be allowed once their state adopted a new code.

What is (or was) an access-controlled egress door, anyway? These code sections describe an electrified lock that is released by a sensor that detects a building occupant approaching the door on the egress side. The sections in each of the model codes also require the lock to be released by an auxiliary button, with detailed requirements for this switch prescribed in the codes. The locks must unlock upon activation of the fire alarm/sprinkler system, and upon loss of power. Current model codes also require the locks to be listed to UL 294 or UL 1034.

The electrified lock that is typically used in this type of system is an electromagnetic lock, where there is an electromagnet in a housing mounted on the frame, and a steel armature mounted on the door. When the magnet is energized, it bonds to the armature and locks the door. To unlock the door requires external release devices such as the sensor and auxiliary push button mandated by the model codes.

The sections addressing access-controlled egress doors were not removed from the model codes, they were renamed to more accurately describe an electrified lock that is released by a sensor (typically a mag-lock). Here is a screenshot from the redline edition of the 2015 IBC/IFC – similar changes were made to the 2018 edition of NFPA 101:

1010.1.9.8 Sensor release of electrically locked ~~Access-controlled~~ egress doors. The electric locks on sensor released ~~entrance~~ doors located in a *means of egress* in buildings with an occupancy in Group A, B, E, I-1, I-2, I-4, M, R-1 or R-2 and entrance doors to tenant spaces in occupancies in Group A, B, E, I-1, I-2, I-4, M, R-1 or R-2 are permitted where ~~to be equipped with an *approved* entrance and egress access control system, listed in accordance with UL 294, which shall be~~ installed and operated in accordance with all of the following criteria:

For more information about the requirements of the model codes for locks released by a sensor, refer to Type 3 on the Special Locking Arrangements below.

Type 3) Is the lock an electromagnetic lock released by a sensor above the door?

There are two code sections that typically apply to electromagnetic locks, depending on the type of release devices installed (see also Type 4). An electromagnetic lock consists of an electromagnet in a housing mounted on the door frame, and a steel armature mounted on the door. When power is applied, the magnet bonds to the armature and locks the door. Without the release devices mandated by the model codes, these locks would not allow egress when they are powered, so it's crucial to understand what is required by each of the two applicable code sections.

One method of releasing a mag-lock is with a sensor above the door on the egress side that detects an approaching occupant and unlocks the lock. In past editions of the model codes, the section addressing this application was called Access Controlled Egress Doors, leading some to believe that this section was applicable to every door equipped with an access control reader. That was not the intent of the codes, so the section titles were changed to indicate that the sections apply only to locks released by a sensor – not to every door with access control. Note that some sensors mounted above the door are used by the security system to signal that someone has exited and may not be related to the locking or unlocking of the door (this code section does not apply to those sensors).

:Other types of electrified locks may be released by a sensor above the door, but the most common lock used in this application is an electromagnetic lock.

DAD JOKES FOR 2025

What do New Year's Day parades have in common with Santa Claus?	No one is awake to see either of them.
What is a New Year's resolution?	Something that goes in one year and out the other.
What did the little champagne bottle call his father?	Pop!
What do you call always wanting a date for New Year's Eve?	Social security.
What was Dr. Frankenstein's New Year's resolution?	To make new friends.
What do you call someone who says they know all the words to "Auld Lang Syne"?	A liar.
What's the worst part of jogging on New Year's Eve?	The ice falling out of your drink!
What New Year's resolution should a basketball player never make?	To travel more.
Did you hear about the guy who started fixing breakfast at midnight on Dec. 31?	He wanted to make a New Year's toast.
Why did the man sprinkle sugar on his pillow on New Year's Eve?	He wanted to start the year with sweet dreams.
What should people never eat on New Year's Eve?	Fire crackers.
What's a digital camera's New Year's resolution?	1080p.
Where can you go to practice math on New Year's Eve?T	imes Square.
Why should you put your new calendar in the freezer?	To start off the New Year in a cool way.
What do you tell someone you didn't see on New Year's Eve?	I haven't seen you for a year!
What happened to the man who shoplifted a calendar on New Year's Eve?	He got 12 months!
What's the one group that hates New Year's Day?	The New Year's Eve cleanup crew.
What did Adam say to Eve on Dec. 31?	It's New Year's, Eve.

If you are interested in following the Little Rock Chapter, our links are as follows (*for Facebook and LinkedIn look for the CSI Little Rock Chapter*):

Website: https://csilittlerock.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com

If you are interested in Joining CSI or if you are just interested in keeping up with the information provided by CSI, follow this link to the Institute Website Membership Pages:

For Membership Information:
https://www.csiresources.org/communities/membership/individual-membership

To Join CSI:
https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/CSIRESOURCES/143a718d-6df6-484a-8a79-76d79635b741/UploadedImages/PDFs/CSI_MembershipFormFY18.pdf

To See what CSI is all about:
https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/CSIRESOURCES/143a718d-6df6-484a-8a79-76d79635b741/UploadedImages/CSI_ResourcesCatalogFinalLowRes.pdf

LITTLE ROCK CHAPTER INFORMATION

Chapter Officers

President:	Billy J. Mathis, FCSI, CDT
President-Elect:	Open
Immediate Past President:	Melissa Aguiar, CSI, CCS, CDT, SCIP
Secretary:	Melissa Aguiar, CSI, CCS, CDT, SCIP
Treasurer:	Clark Wood, CSI
Directors	
Operations	Open
Honors	Billy J. Mathis, FCSI, CDT
Membership	Clark Wood, CSI
Education / Certification	Open

Chapter Info

Chapter Website:	**https://csilittlerock.org**
Chapter Newsletter:	**SpecWork**
Chapter Meeting Day and Time:	**2nd Wednesday of Each Month unless otherwise specified by the Chapter President**
Chapter Board Meeting Day and Time:	**1st Friday of each Month unless otherwise specified by Chapter President**

If you are interested in Joining CSI or if you are just interested in keeping up with the information provided by CSI, See the slides shown from the “Why CSI” presentation