



# Secure Escape - does your door comply?

The 2009/10 Fire Statistics from the Department of Communities and Local Government show that there were 39,000 accidental fires in U.K. dwellings with 328 fatalities and a further 9,200 non fatal casualties. The Fire & Rescue Service advice to householders is to "Create an escape plan".



*The Fire & Rescue Service attending at a house fire.*

The fire service advice is to plan ahead your actual escape routes with the hope they are not required. Doors if possible should be the first choice for exiting the property. In the panic of a fire and the property filling with smoke you are unlikely to be able to think and act clearly enough to be able find a set of keys. Therefore keyless egress becomes an imperative.

The Building Regulations (England and Wales) Approved B -1 Dwelling houses:

"The need for easy and rapid evacuation of a building in case of fire may conflict with the control of entry and exit in the interest of

security". It also states "Potential conflicts should be identified and resolved at the design stage and not left until after the completion of the work".

The need to keep the locking style of the door flush with the frame to achieve a consistent weatherseal coupled with the need for enhanced security has over the years led to the increased popularity of multi-point locks. These have, in the main, been based on those designed for the mainland European markets like Germany and Austria, although these days they are frequently manufactured further afield.

Consequently the specific and particular requirements of the U.K. market have often had to be met with cobbled together compromises. For example to meet the requirement for keyless egress thumb turn cylinders are sometimes seen as the solution. Thumb turn cylinders can be a clear compromise to the security of the dwelling in that burglars gaining entry by another means can use the door to exit the property, generally unchallenged, carrying out with them what ever they wish to steal.

To overcome this issue some lock manufacturers have bolted on a second cylinder position so that the lock can be deadlocked off from the outside when property is unoccupied. While this may be a functional solution, some may argue, in engineering and design terms it is hardly the most elegant or cost effective.

BS 8220 -1 Security of Buildings against crime – dwellings states "8.3 Securing external doors  
8.3.1 Single leaf, single swing final exit doors.

The designated final exit door in dwellings, for use in the case of fire is usually, but not always, the main entrance door. This door should be capable of being secured by a key-operated device from either side. When the dwelling is occupied, a means of escape without the use of a key should be provided".

"NOTE 1 When a multi-point locking system is used, the latchbolt should be withdrawn from the outside only by the use of a key".

Two British Standards which deal with security & keyless egress BS 8621 'Thief resistant lock assembly – keyless egress' and BS 10621 'Thief resistant dual-mode lock assembly', were originally developed for single point locks. The main difference between the two is that BS 10621 requires a fully secure locking facility for when the property is unoccupied i.e. a slightly more sophisticated lock. Both standards require the external use of a key to gain access/ operate the latchbolt and keyless egress for when the dwelling is occupied.



*An example of the devastation a fire can cause inside a house*

In the U.K. the clearest guidance on achieving the correct balance between egress and security in a variety of types of dwellings comes unsurprisingly from the joint police and fire service agreement on 'Means of Escape' and is clearly laid out in both the Secured by Design "New Homes" brochure and the National House Building Council, NHBC, guidance on "Secure Escape".

Secured by Design states that doorsets must be certified to BS 6375 1-3 :2009 and front doorsets should meet the minimum requirements of the latest version of PAS 24 for enhanced security.

The NHBC guidance on main entrance doors for all types of dwellings says that "Locking devices fitted to entrance doors should permit emergency egress without the use of a key when the dwelling is occupied". The Building Standards in Scotland have very similar requirements for keyless egress when the building is occupied.

On dwellings with an alternative means of escape, these are typically houses with a front and rear door, the guidance states that external handles on multi point locks should be split spindle to avoid operating the latch and prevent possible follow-in crime. And "Enhanced security can also be achieved by providing the facility to deadlock the internal handle when leaving the dwelling unoccupied" (NHBC).

For dwellings without an alternative means of escape opening onto a communal access, typically flats accessed off a communal stairway, the recommendation is that "occupants must be afforded the opportunity to unlock the door from the inner face without the use of a key, investigate the cause of a fire or other emergency and return to raise the alarm without any use of a key – the only function that a key has is to lock and unlock the door from



*Securistyle's Defender Door Lock meets the requirements of Secure Escape.*

the fully secure position from the outer face of the door when leaving an empty dwelling or returning to a secure dwelling" (SBD).

These are the basic requirements demanded of any multi point lock. The other hardware and fittings naturally have an impact. For example there are crime risks associated with letterplates which need addressing. Door chains and viewers, cylinders and handles all have a part to play in keeping the occupant safe and the dwelling secure. But it is the multi-point lock which in essence has to blend the two elements of escape and security.

Many multi-point lock suppliers claim to be able to meet the particular demands of the U.K. Few of them provide solutions specifically designed for the U.K. Even fewer actually manufacture their locks in the UK. No one is closer to their market than Securistyle who manufacture the uniquely versatile Defender Door Lock in Cheltenham. A multi-point lock designed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We have indeed entered a brave new world with this multi-point lock. It is durable, endurance tested beyond the

basic requirements of BS 6373-2. It is corrosion resistance tested beyond the top level of BS 1670, we are, after all, an island nation with one of the longest coastline in Europe. It is strong beyond the requirements of PAS24. It is adaptable and versatile enough to elegantly meet, in one multi-point lock, all of the demands of the U.K. market. The Defender Door Lock is a genuine solution which marries the needs of escape, strength and security.

Now ask yourself two questions:

Does my door(s) provide keyless escape when the house is occupied?

Can the door(s) be fully secured, deadlocked, when the house is unoccupied?

**Defender Door Lock – Secure Escape – [ ✓ ]**



*An example of the devastation fire can cause to a home*

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