



**Learning Objective:** The student shall be able to list some of the limitations on egress door hardware.

**F**ire inspectors are problem solvers: When they find a code violation, they issue corrective orders to improve public safety. The illustration is an example of how a fire inspector's orders can be misapplied.

Look closely at the top and bottom thirds of the left side of the door slab where you will see two sets of small holes. During a visit, the fire inspector found two hasp-type latches on the door leaf, so the door could be locked to the frame. They had been added with the existing panic hardware assembly. He correctly ordered the tenant to remove the unauthorized locking devices because the fire code permits only a single operation to release any door or leaf.

Upon reinspection, the fire inspector found the hasp-type latches had been removed, but the tenant added a second panic hardware assembly with a built-in alarm. This also violates the fire code requirement that only a single operation release any door or leaf. Additionally, doors, handles, pulls, latches, locks and other door hardware operating devices may be installed only between 34 inches (864 mm) and 48 inches (1,219 mm) above the finished floor. The newly installed alarmed panic hardware assembly is located above the maximum allowable height.

As an interesting side note to the picture, the exit sign was missing during the original fire safety inspection. The fire inspector ordered a replacement, but when installing this brand new sign, the installer punched the left and right arrows out of the face; however, the door opens onto a corridor that offers only one directional choice.

So what are this day's Coffee Break Training messages? First, this example illustrates the importance of conducting reinspections. A tenant or owner's interpretation or solution to a corrective notice may result in other problems or violations. Second, don't ever forget the importance of providing clear instructions regarding corrections. Third, be prepared to share the text of fire and building code sections with tenants and owners, so they can see the requirements. Fourth, take a few minutes to educate these folks both about the code requirements and the reasons for them. Understanding the code's "intent" will go a long way to achieving compliance. Finally, don't ever forget that you might be surprised when you return for your reinspection.



This exit door has too many hardware devices on it to comply with the model fire codes. *Photo courtesy of Tim Mier, Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department, Ohio.*

