

**MAYFLOWER SALES COMPANY, INC.**

***Panic Device Applications***

***Overview of Panic Device Applications  
in Relation to Fire Codes  
and Building Laws***

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When choosing exit hardware there are numerous inexpensive panic devices available. Generally, while quality exit devices may be expensive, they are required by the building code. But one must understand the need for panic devices before an informed purchasing decision can be made.

New York City Building Laws tell us when panic devices are required.\* It also defines what a panic device is:

**27-371 (k) Panic Hardware**

- (1) Exit door shall be equipped with fire exit bolts when providing an exit from:
  - a. Buildings classified in occupancy group G (schools), except exit doors opening directly outdoors at grade from rooms having an occupant load of less than 75 persons;
  - b. F-1 places of assembly:  
Theaters, playhouses, opera houses, churches, lecture halls, court rooms, convention halls, concert halls, sports arenas, planetariums, motion picture theatres;
  - c. F-2, F-3 and F-4 places of assembly having an occupant load exceeding 300 persons, except places of assembly having doors that are not equipped with locks and are openable at all times.
    - F-2: Grandstands, bleachers, stadiums, drive-in theaters, amusement attractions and devices, bandstands, skating rinks.
    - F-3: Exhibition halls, galleries, gymnasiums, museums, passenger terminals, bowling alleys, billiard parlors, skating rinks.
    - F-4: Restaurants, night clubs, cabarets, dance halls, ballrooms, banquet rooms, cafeterias, snack bars, taverns, coffee houses.
  
- (2) Fire exit bolts shall be of an approved type, and shall release when a pressure (not) exceeding 15 pounds is applied to the releasing device in the direction of exit travel. The bars or panels shall extend at least 2/3 of the width of the door and shall be placed at least 30”, but not more than 44” above the floor.

There is another differentiation that is not addressed directly in the New York City Building Laws,\* but is important. Some doors that require panic devices are also fire doors, as well as exit doors. A “fire exit door” is not necessarily a rated fire door. A rated fire door is in a wall that forms a fire compartment, usually within a building, not very often on an outside wall. Rated fire doors have metal tags on the hinge edge or top edge that define the rating: 3/4 hour, 1-1/2 hour, 3 hour.

If the door is a rated fire door, the panic device is different than if the door is just an exit door. Panic devices for fire doors do not have dogging and they have been tested for rated fire door use as well as panic exit. A panic device that is rated for fire doors will have a label identifying it as “Fire Exit Hardware”. Do not use a panic device on a rated fire door unless it has the “Fire Exit Hardware” label. Do not use a panic device on an exit door unless it has a label on it identifying it as “Panic Hardware”.

*\* New York City Building Laws are referenced for illustrative purposes. Please refer to your local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for your local laws and applicable codes.*