



# Latch Retraction Lock Solutions

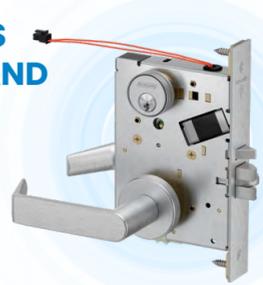
Installation Best Practices for Fire-Rated and Non-Rated Openings



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## AS BUILDINGS EVOLVE TO MEET MODERN EXPECTATIONS FOR ACCESSIBILITY, HYGIENE, AND SECURITY, THE DEMAND FOR ELECTRIFIED HARDWARE CONTINUES TO GROW.

Among the more versatile and user-friendly options for enhancing both security and user experience are latch retraction capable locks. Most commonly these are mortise locks. Their ability to deliver smooth, quiet operation and compatibility with modern access technologies makes them especially valuable.



Like any new application and particularly as a retrofit, ensuring the lock's capabilities fit the circumstance while meeting code can hinge on installation. Whether you are working on a fire-rated stairwell or converting a single-use restroom for hands-free access, understanding the installation requirements is essential to avoid compliance issues, delays, or costly rework.

### Installation Starts With The Door

In many retrofit projects, the existing door is already prepped for a standard mortise lock. This can make the swap easier if staying in the same brand and product series because many latch retraction locks fit the same pocket as their mechanical and electrified counterparts.

So long as the motor and electronics are contained within the lock body, usually only minor adjustments – such as a function hole – may be needed. This type of change is typically allowed under job site preparation guidelines outlined in NFPA 80, Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives.

If the change is a mechanical-to-electrified conversion, however, powering the lock introduces a new layer of complexity. To bring power to the lock, a raceway must be drilled through the door. On a fire-rated door, this is considered a field modification unless the door manufacturer's listing explicitly allows it.

If the listing is not previously defined for raceway compatibility, prior approval from the door manufacturer and the listing laboratory is required. Without this step an installer could compromise the door's fire rating and require it to be relabeled. Early coordination with the door supplier is essential to avoid delays or costly rework.



### Non-Rated Doors: A Smoother Path

For non-fire-rated doors, such as those found on restrooms, offices, or interior suite entries, the installation process is far more flexible. These doors are not typically subject to fire door standards, so raceways can be drilled without special approval. This makes them ideal candidates for accessibility upgrades, especially when paired with automatic operators for hands-free entry.

Consider a school maintenance team tasked with converting single-use restrooms to meet accessibility and hygiene standards. The existing doors are non-rated, so in this case, an electrified latch retraction lock is an ideal solution. The team can drill the raceway without special approval. The new lock (as a brand and series-specific replacement) will likely fit the existing prep, and the auto operator integrates easily with power coming to the hinge side of the door for both. Add a card reader or wave actuator for a compliant upgrade that improves accessibility and user experience, without triggering code complications.



### Fire Door Compliance Considerations for Field Modifications

Whenever these systems are applied to fire-rated door openings, their benefits must be balanced with strict adherence to NFPA 80, which governs the integrity and safety of these critical components. An "opening protective" can include the door, door frame, lock, and other components. All components are required to be listed and labeled for the purpose of ensuring the integrity of the fire protection.

You will need to have proper support to gain approvals through the door manufacturer and listing agency if raceway drilling is needed on a fire-rated door. Unapproved modifications may require relabeling, which involves inspection and added cost. Note that many distributors will have a shop that is authorized to modify an existing fire door or frame in the shop and apply a new label. This can make a significant difference in project timelines and outcomes.

### Proper Installation Drives Success

Latch retraction locks offer a powerful combination of security, accessibility, and aesthetics – but only when installed correctly. By understanding the differences between fire-rated and non-rated applications, planning for power routing, and avoiding unnecessary modifications, installers can deliver a compliant, future-ready solution.

Contact an Allegion Professional to Learn More

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