



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	10/12/2010	Interpretation	10-037
Topic	School ground gates and fences within path of the Exit Discharge		
Code Section(s)	2010 California Building Code, section 1027.6 2010 California Fire Code, Section 503.5.2		
Requested by	Division of State Architect Diana Licon, HQ Acting Lead Fire & Life Safety Officer 1102 Q Street, Suite 5100 Sacramento, CA 95811-6550 (916) 323-2324 (916) 327-3371 fax Diana.Licon@dgs.ca.gov		

2010 CFC 503.5.2 (SFM amendment) indicates that “school grounds” may be fenced and gates therein may be equipped with locks, provided that properly located and sized safe dispersal areas are provided within the fenced area.

2010 CBC 1027.6 Access to a public way requires that an exit discharge provide a direct and unobstructed access to the public way.

The exception to the 2010 CBC gives the parameters of the Safe Dispersal Area requirements when utilized in lieu of direct access to the public way. Item #4 states that the (area) shall be provided with a safe and unobstructed path of travel from the building.

1. If a K-12 school ground (campus) is fenced and the gates therein equipped with locks, per CFC 503.5.2, are the gates in any intermediary fencing that traverses the Exit Discharge path to the Safe Dispersal Area(s) required to have panic hardware to meet the provision for a direct and unobstructed access to these Safe Dispersal Area(s)?

Yes. 2010 California Building Code Section 1008.1.10 would apply.

2. Where Safe Dispersal Area is not provided, will the gates on the perimeter of the school ground be required to have panic hardware?

Yes. During normal school hours and during special events, panic hardware would be required at any door or gate along the egress pathway to a public way or safe-dispersal area.

3. Are Community Colleges exempt from these requirements?

No.