



## California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12-05-02	Interpretation #	02-047
Topic	Thumb Latches		
Code Section(s)	Section 1003.3.1.8, California Building Code (1998 ed)		
Requested by	Robert Bohman Alameda County Fire Department 2241 Redwood Road Castro Valley, CA 94546		

***1. Does Section 1003.3.1.8 allow the use of a thumb turn lock that is installed independent of the exit hardware on an exit door that is not the main exit?***

Yes. See Exceptions #2 and #3 of 1003.3.1.8 as they pertain to Groups R and I occupancies.

***2. Does the exception to Section 1003.3.1.8 allow the use of a thumb turn lock on the main exit?***

Yes. See Exception #1. However, the thumb turn lock cannot be engaged during business hours.

***3. May an exit door be maintained closed and latched with only a thumb turn lock and not other exit hardware?***

No. While there are different types of hardware for exit doors, a door cannot be latched with only a thumb turn lock. It should have positive latching mechanisms that are operable through the use of a door knob, a handle or panic hardware.

***4. If a thumb turn lock is permitted on an exit door, are there any minimum size requirements necessary to ensure that the thumb turn will not result in special knowledge or effort?***

No. However, ADA requirements must be considered.