

Global Lock, Lock Out and Lock Down Procedures Make For Safer Work and Education Facilities

Given the recent upsurge in gun-related violence in our workplaces and schools, there is added impetus to put policies, measures and physical systems in place that minimize exposure and are sufficiently reactive to protect facilities and save lives when violence arises. This document will deal with physical security systems that can help prevent or diffuse a crisis situation.

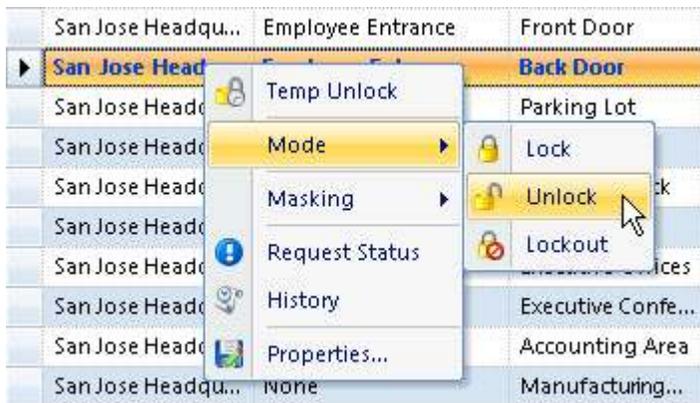
The first step in prevention is to keep out those people who should not be allowed in the facility for any reason. An electronic access control system, if properly configured and managed, can provide the same or greater security than physical fences and gates. In addition to preventing unauthorized personnel from gaining entry, access privileges can be cut off access immediately for those who no longer work, study, or otherwise belong on site. Furthermore, unlike a mechanical key, electronic control systems maintain an audit trail of who came and went, where and when, thus providing crucial information if an incident needs to be investigated.

Even if a weapon-carrying individual with a valid access credential gains entrance to a workplace or school, the electronic access control system can be the most effective tool in keeping him or her away from employees, teachers and students by further locking down the facility. Some systems have functions that allow lockdowns to be done automatically or through human actions such as clicking a mouse, punching a code on a keypad, or some other trigger action.

Definitions

Generally, there are three types of "lockdown."

Global Lock - Doors controlled by electronic access may be programmed to be unlocked for free access and egress during certain times of the day (for example, Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM). Free access may be desirable for the front door to a facility so that visitors, vendors, delivery people and the like can enter and leave the lobby area without requiring an access card. This is normally accomplished through a programmed Auto Unlock Schedule. Additionally, system operators can manually unlock individual or groups of doors with the click of a mouse, thus overriding the current locked state of the door.



If a system is configured to Global Lock by any trigger, a Global Lock function will serve to lock all doors that were unlocked via an Auto Unlock schedule or that have been unlocked manually by an operator. This means there is no more free access, but valid credentials still allow entry into authorized areas. For a crisis situation, this would not be effective if the gun-wielding individual had a valid access card.

Lock Out - When the system is configured for Lock Out, it functions the same as Global Lock in that all unlocked doors are locked, but additionally authorized cards are denied from gaining

access. A benefit of Lock Out is that if an authorized individual or someone in possession of a valid card is suspected of potential violence, they will be denied further access within the facility, thus preventing future harm.. Additionally, valid credential holders cannot accidentally open doors to aid a dangerous person, nor could they be forced to do so under duress.

Lock Down - This is the most severe condition, because not only does it lock all doors and prevent individuals with valid cards from gaining access, it locks the doors in such a way that egress is also prevented by disabling the Request to Exit input. Unfortunately, people may put themselves and others at risk by opening a door to escape or to evaluate the situation. By preventing egress, people are kept in a secure area and cannot expose themselves and others to danger. Of course there is no way to prevent egress when a mechanical exit device such as a crash bar is in place, and fire codes require free egress in case of emergency, but in crisis situations such lockdowns are often permitted.

The example below shows how a system might be configured to follow one of the three procedures.

Global Lock Type	Lock
Precedence	Lock
Hardware Control	Lockout (No Access, REX enabled)
Global Reset Type	Lockdown (No Access, REX disabled)

Trigger Conditions

How can an electronic access control system be changed into one of these more secure modes should circumstances call for it? Sophisticated systems allow the execution of one or more of these types of procedures based on a variety of input conditions called “triggers.” For instance, the system operator can click a button within the access control software to change the behavior of the doors to a more secure state. This requires that someone with authorization to control and manage the system be notified of an incident and quickly takes the appropriate action, and it also makes it less likely that procedures will not accidentally or carelessly be set in motion. The examples below show menus where the operator can choose a number of options that instantly change the system's operating parameters.



Strategically placed panic or duress buttons, a special code on strategically placed keypads, a special designated panic card, a series of card presentations to the reader within a short time frame, or any one of a number of state changes to the system's auxiliary inputs can also trigger the procedure at the hardware level. It should be noted that these devices should be located in such a way that they are not susceptible to prank or accidental triggering, or require a PIN or other secure means to set the procedure in motion.



Organizations that wish to implement lockdown scenarios should not only choose a system that can quickly switch to whatever type of higher security parameters are desired, but also specify a system that has the flexibility to meet requirements from a trigger standpoint.

Other Flexibility Factors

In addition to being able to set whether the system should Globally Lock, Lock Out, or Lock Down in case of emergency and the ability to choose from a variety of triggers, other flexibility considerations merit discussion. First, it is beneficial to choose which doors participate in a lockdown procedure. In most cases, organizations will choose all doors, but there may be some reasons to exempt some doors such they retain their programmed state when a lockdown procedure is executed.

Second, it is preferable that the system have the capability to designate some credentials as override cards; that is the cards function normally to gain access even if the system has been locked down. Such cards can be given to emergency responders, such as law enforcement or fire personnel, to open doors where necessary, to capture the violent individual, protect a group of people, or notify the population that the crisis is now over.

Finally, some systems can automatically send out an SMS text and/or email to law enforcement or anyone else who should be notified immediately.

Summary

Given the recent increase in violence in the workplace and schools, the need exists to be able to instantly lock down all or part of a facility down at a moment's notice to protect the people inside from a harmful individual. Some of the commercially available access control systems have the ability to do this via a number of ways such as the click of mouse or through a human interface to the system's hardware. Organizations should choose a system that offers the flexibility and options they need to meet their individual requirements, as well as making sure local law enforcement are part of the solution.