



School Safety Monthly

October 2016

Improving School Lockdowns



Photos: Rachel Wilson



Message from the Editor



It's Halloween time and while we hope all your little ghouls and goblins are keeping it safe this holiday we are here as always working to keep real world fears at bay with safety. When tragedy strikes our first instinct is often to change the way we are doing things. After Sandy Hook one of our most vital protocols came under scrutiny - Lockdowns.

Many felt that the Lockdown concept had failed based on misconceptions and inaccurate information. Because of this, schools across the nation have changed their procedures from a plan that works without actually knowing why it had failed. For any plan to work there must be consistency, training, and proper equipment. In previous editions of School Safety Monthly we've reviewed how the concepts of training and consistency affect your abilities to succeed during a crisis. In this edition Chris Dorn reviews some steps you'll need to consider when working with

lockdown equipment. In addition I highly recommend you take time to listen to the great podcast below. Happy Halloween!

-Rachel



Listen Up: Access Control Industry Podcast Features SHI Analyst Chris Dorn



Senior Analyst Chris Dorn was recently featured on Episode 1 of "Unlocked" - a new podcast from Assa Abloy!

"Episode 1: Unlocking Campus Lockdown"

Active shooter emergencies are a reality on today's campuses. On this first episode of Unlocked, we take a look at what can go wrong during these emergencies and what can be done to make sure students, staff and faculty are kept safe. Learn about the different lockdown procedures and protocols, and why every campus needs to have a good emergency preparedness plan in place.

[Click here to download this 18 minute podcast as an MP3](#)

[Click here to listen, subscribe and download](#)





Avoiding Lockdown Device Letdowns

by Chris Dorn

One of the most popular types of school safety products in recent years are the category of device that facilitate quick lockdowns in schools. These are not needed for most new buildings, but are typically most useful in older buildings that pose a challenge for locking doors quickly. I would like to go over a few tips for using these devices successfully and common mistakes to avoid.

1. Using the wrong device for the door type. This is an issue that must be addressed before devices are purchased. For example, popular lockdown magnets will not work on wooden doors or doors with the wrong type or size of metal for the magnet. There are also variants of lockdown devices for standard doors, double doors and other unique door types. I have also seen flip-latch style devices used on heavy fire doors that quickly bend and damage the device.

2. Not knowing how to use the device properly. Many lockdown devices are incredibly simple – potentially deceptively simple if you do not take the time to learn how to use it and practice with it. For example, most lockdown devices require the door to be locked in advance so that the device can be tripped quickly in an emergency.

3. Illogical applications of lockdown devices. There are some cases where it just does not make sense to use a lockdown device. If you are already in a secure area with a strong door and an up-to-date lock with locking capability on the interior, there is probably no need for any additional lock-

ing or barricade device. Using additional and unnecessary equipment during an emergency situation can cost valuable seconds.

4. Improper installation. This relates to item #1 above but ties together elements of all three previous categories. This is most effectively addressed by including maintenance/facilities staff members, installers, integrators or other relevant individuals in the training process as appropriate. Typically an improperly installed device is the result of someone who does not understand the purpose and real-world use of the device, and/or someone who does not have adequate background in building repair and maintenance.

5. Going overboard. This is typically the result of a fear-based mentality. In some cases, this is a result of exposure to violence (real violence or media coverage of school violence). It is also common after exposure to certain types of training programs that teach extreme measures and close-quarters combat concepts to school staff. While a proactive approach is imperative, it should be one component in the context of broader staff empowerment to respond to all-hazards.

Chris Dorn is a co-founder of Safe Havens where he serves as a Senior Analyst. He regularly performs school safety, security and emergency preparedness assessments and provides technical assistance to schools and integrators looking to enhance life safety. He can be reached at our web contact page at safehavensinternational.org



As with any piece of equipment, it's value depends on knowing how to properly install and use it.

Tip: Have a "door locking drill" in your school during a staff day to allow staff to practice the specific action of using their door hardware without the distraction of a full lockdown drill.



An example of going overboard in a room that is already secured by a strong door and lock.

Tip: Do a door audit before any purchase of equipment, and get feedback from staff members about their workspace door hardware to find out what is actually needed.



Photo of the Month

If you have this type of lock on a room, storage closet or any space large enough to fit a person, this is an excellent practice to follow. This not only prevents theft of the lock but makes it impossible for the hasp latch to be used to trap someone inside using a pencil or other object.

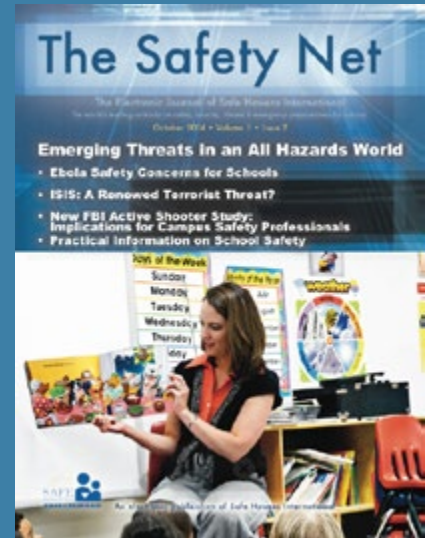


Chris Dorn/Safe Havens International

Subscribe to *School Safety Monthly* and *The Safety Net*

In addition to *School Safety Monthly*, Safe Havens International also publishes an annual electronic journal titled *The Safety Net*. This is a more in-depth publication that allows for a longer format of articles and a detailed look at topics related to school safety, school security, emergency preparedness for schools, safe school design, building climate, safe school culture and school law enforcement concepts. If you are on the mailing list for *School Safety Monthly* you will also receive new issues of *The Safety Net*. If you are not already a subscriber, click here to sign up:

<http://www.safehavensinternational.org/newsletter>



School Safety Monthly

[Chris Dorn](#).....Editor-in-Chief

Rachel Wilson.....Editor & Art Director

[Michael Dorn](#).....Executive Director

For submissions or reproduction rights, please visit our website and use the "Contact Us" link:

www.safehavensinternational.org



Want more?

Follow us on social media:

 [Facebook.com/SafeHavensIntl](https://www.facebook.com/SafeHavensIntl)

 [@SafeHavensIntl](https://twitter.com/SafeHavensIntl)

 [Vimeo.com/safehavensintl/](https://vimeo.com/safehavensintl/)

 [Youtube.com/SafeHavensIntl](https://www.youtube.com/SafeHavensIntl)

 [Safe Havens International](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Safe-Havens-International)