PURPOSE of NUMBERING SCHOOL DOORS:
When emergencies occur, the rapid response of emergency workers to the incident can be critical. Many schools have dozens of doors providing entrance and egress to their buildings. During an emergency it may be necessary for responders to gain access through the door closest to the emergency scene. Numbering external doors can have great value to the emergency responders and will also assist your students and staff in acclimating themselves to door locations in case of an emergency.

Numbering Sequence:
- All exterior doors that allow access to the interior of the school will be numbered in a sequential order starting with the main entrance (office door/public entrance).
- The office door (visitor’s entrance) will always be #1.
- Subsequent doors will be numbered in sequential order in a clockwise manner.

Front of School
Typically responders call this Side “A”
**Exterior Numbering Position:**
- All exterior doors will be numbered at the top right.
- Where a multiple bank of doors (3 or more) is present, it is good practice to center the number or put the same number at both ends of the bank.
  - Each door may be numbered separately, as follows: 3-1, 3-2 etc.
  - Some schools have chosen to mark each door with an individual number when they face different directions (east and north)

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**Number Sizing:**
- Based upon the International Fire Code for Premises Identification, Section 505, all numbers should be:
  - Visible from the street
  - Contrast with their background.
  - Arabic Numbers, minimum of 4 inches high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch.
    - It is recommended that 8-inch numbers be used if your budget allows.
    - Some schools have chosen to use 12- inch numbers.
    - Please note that the larger, the number the greater the distance it will be visible by responders.
- All exterior doors should be numbered on the outside at the top of the door.
- Contrasting color is absolutely necessary, as is retro-reflective materials for low light or smoky conditions. If you have an issue with numbers not contrasting enough with the background of the door, consider using a “back panel” of a contrasting color.
- In most cases, white numbers work well on clear glass. While a bulk purchase of one color may be economical it may be less useful on some surfaces or require a “backing” panel as previously noted.
Interior Number Position:
- A number should be placed on the interior of the door which matches the outside number.
- Interior numbers should be placed always on the hinge side of the door near the bottom so they can be viewed in smoky conditions.

Non-Access Doors:
- Doors which do not allow access to the building should not be numbered. Examples of these may be storage rooms or trash rooms.
- These rooms may be labeled “Storage Only,” “No Access,” etc… but should not be numbered.

Courtyard Doors:
- Completely enclosed courtyards are numbered C-1, C-2, etc., and are numbered on both the inside and outside, in the same manner as other exterior doors.
- Generally the courtyard door closest to the main entrance is numbered C-1.
- Multiple courtyards can be numbered:
  - 1st courtyard: C1-1, C1-2, etc.
  - 2nd courtyard: C2-1, C2-2, etc.

Roof hatches and roof access doors:
- Roof hatches and roof access doors should be numbered R-1, R-2, etc.
- Number size for roof hatches is as follows:
  - Exterior: 6-inch minimum
  - Interior: 4-inch on the interior as with regular doors
- As with all numbers, a contrasting color is absolutely necessary for visibility.
- All numbers should be retro-reflective for low light or smoky conditions.
Roll Up (garage style) Doors:

- Roll up doors that provide access to the interior of the school should be numbered consistent with other exterior doors.
- Roll up doors are most prominently marked by placing the number between ½ and ¾ of the distance off the ground.
  - Example: the number for an 8-foot high door would be placed 4- and 6-feet off the ground.
  - If a roll up door is left open during the majority of the day, and access to the school is otherwise restricted by locked interior doors, consider marking the door along the door frame near the top.
    - NOTE: The practice of leaving these doors open should be strongly discouraged through local procedures and guidelines as it presents a potential security breach.

Mobile Classrooms:

- Mobile classroom present unique issues and should be numbered using an “M” to signify modular or mobile (M-1, M-2, etc.).
  - Some schools choose to use numbering as though the mobile units are another floor or wing; Example: modular units are numbered 301, 302 and 303 located next to a small two-story elementary school.
  - However, please note that best practice would be to use an “M” in front of the number to avoid confusion by emergency responders.
- Modular should be numbered near each door and also on the “street” side of the modular unit so the numbers are visible to emergency responders.

Areas of Rescue Assistance:

- If local responders have designated areas of rescue assistance, they should be marked with a minimum 24-inch “R” on the exterior of the window closest to the fire lane or as otherwise designated by the fire official for the municipality.
- Areas of Rescue Assistance should be marked conspicuously within the building so persons needing assistance can readily identify those areas or rooms during an emergency situation.
Remember: NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) standards require two-way communications at these areas of rescue.

Unique Situations:

- As with other situations school design and configuration present unique challenges to a uniform door numbering system. Deviations from this guideline may be made upon the mutual agreement of the school/district and the primary fire department and/or municipality having jurisdiction.
- Nothing in this proposal is intended to require schools to re-number doors which utilize a pre-existing numbering system already agreed upon by responders and school officials.

For more information on school door numbering contact:

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