

# Door Security + Safety

DHI'S PUBLICATION FOR DOOR SECURITY + SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

JULY 2020

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# The Hands-Free Opportunity in Hospitality

Door and hardware professionals are well-positioned to provide touch-free door solutions that the hospitality industry needs to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic.

BY KERBY LECKA

***Door and hardware professionals are well-positioned to provide touch-free door solutions that the hospitality industry needs to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic.***

There's no question that the North American hospitality industry has been decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Even as society recovers these next few months and into 2021, hotel operators are dealing with an unsure future unless they can convince employees, customers and communities of the safety of their facilities through new policies and procedures.

Door and hardware practitioners can become part of the solution by applying some door safety and security technologies to engender peace of mind and create opportunities for sales growth in a recovering economy.

## Historic Low Occupancy

Travel bans, shelter-in-place orders, and social distancing guidelines have created the lowest occupancy rates since 2001. Many workers are furloughed and non-essential facility upgrades have been postponed, among other issues.

Hotel room occupancy in 2020 may drop to below levels seen during the Great Depression in 1933, according to CBRE Group, Inc., a commercial real estate services and investment firm that conducts industry research

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the leisure and hospitality industry has lost as many jobs – more than 7 million – as the construction, government, manufacturing, retail, education and health services industries combined.

### What's the Opportunity?

Why bother addressing an industry that's virtually on life support? Because the travel, tourism, leisure and hospitality market is resilient.

Historically, this sector has experienced some of the greatest downturns due to political strife, terrorist events and economic calamities. But it has also experienced some of the greatest rebounds. The industry is already restructuring operations to accommodate the new realities we are all encountering.

“New social distancing mandates and guest health concerns are creating the new guest journey, one that relies more on technology than ever before,” according to Warren Dehan, President of Maestro PMS – a property management software solution provider for hotel and resort businesses. He was quoted in an article, “Doing More with Less, How Hospitality Management Teams Take Advantage of Touchless Technologies Now,” on [www.hospitalitynet.org](http://www.hospitalitynet.org).

Dehan is talking about touchless tools and apps that reduce or eliminate the need for physical contact, reducing health concerns by limiting exposure with others. You may already be familiar with online and mobile guest registration check-in and check-out. You can probably expect to see increased keyless guest room options, allowing guests to use their smartphones in lieu of traditional keys.

### Consider Offering Hands-Free Door Solutions

Now is the time for door and hardware professionals to offer touchless solutions to the hospitality industry. This can be as simple as offering a hands-free door solution so that no one will ever have to touch a door again.

Imagine offering your customers a hands-free hygienic system by simply pairing today's commercially available sanitary touchless exit switches with a low-energy swing door operator on a door with non-latching hardware. By placing a touchless exit switch on the inside and outside of the doorway, the door operator can be activated by the wave of a hand for access and egress while still meeting fire and life safety requirements. Unless the automatic door operator has its own power supply – as some do – you will need to tap into or add a power supply.



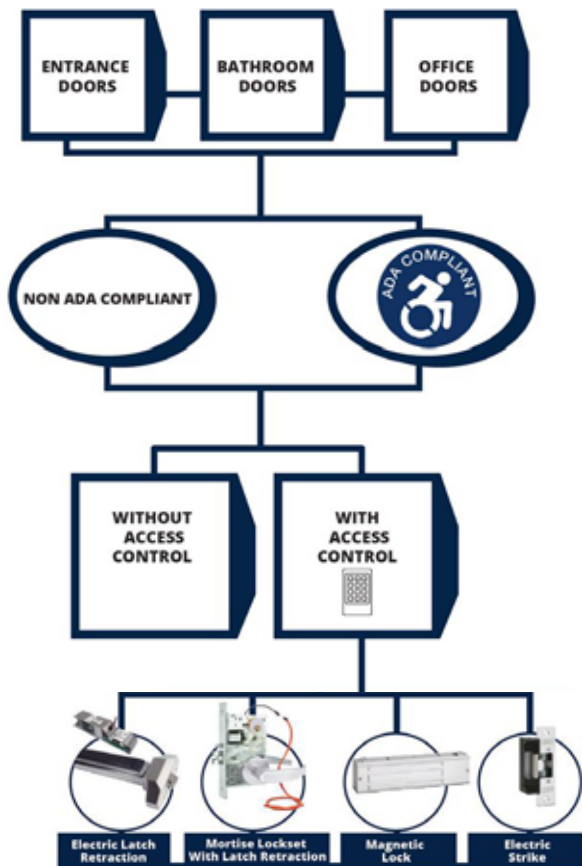
Pairing a touchless exit switch with a low-energy swing door operator on a door with non-latching hardware can provide a hygienic door-opening solution.

Imagine the peace of mind you can provide customers and communities with touchless technology that minimizes the spread of infection or contaminants. Simply qualify any high-touch, high-traffic door at entrances, meeting rooms, offices or bathrooms that can be upgraded to help businesses, facilities and campuses get safely up and running again. This basic pairing of switch and door operator may satisfy ADA compliance provided the door has “Activate Switch To Operate” signage on both sides of the door. However, this is a gray area of interpretation and the local AHJ should be consulted before proceeding.

### ADA Compliance is Another Opportunity

Some door openings may need to meet ADA requirements through the use of bollards, or push plates, or be part of a vestibule combination with other doors. Many manufacturers offer a variety of anti-microbial ADA accessories and buttons that can be set up with automatic door operators to help reduce contamination that could lead to infection. So, even if something must be touched to activate a door for ADA access or egress compliance, you can present a level of reassurance against disease.

## A Guide to Building a Hands-Free Door Solution



1

Qualify the high-touch, high-traffic doors.

2

Confirm if the door needs to meet requirements for ADA compliance.

3

If the door does not require access and egress control, combine sanitary touchless exit switches with a low-energy swing door operator and you're done.

4

If access and egress control is required, identify the type of locking hardware needed for your door application before assembling the appropriate hands-free door solution.

## What About Access Control?

If you are fortunate enough to be invited to provide a hands-free door solution, take the time to look at the rest of the door openings that have or may need access control and identify the type of locking hardware needed for that application. Refer to the flowchart as a guide to build your own hands-free door solution.

## Another Hands-Free Solution

The back openings of many warehouse facilities have mortise locksets on a hollow metal door. There are high-quality electrified mortise lock upgrades available with motorized latch retraction that can be combined with the basic hands-free door solution and ADA actuators and access control keypads to create another code-compliant solution. The same hands-free door solution is flexible enough to use with the addition of a magnetic lock, where allowed by code. It can also be modified to use with a cylindrical lockset by simply adding an electric strike.

## A Final Thought

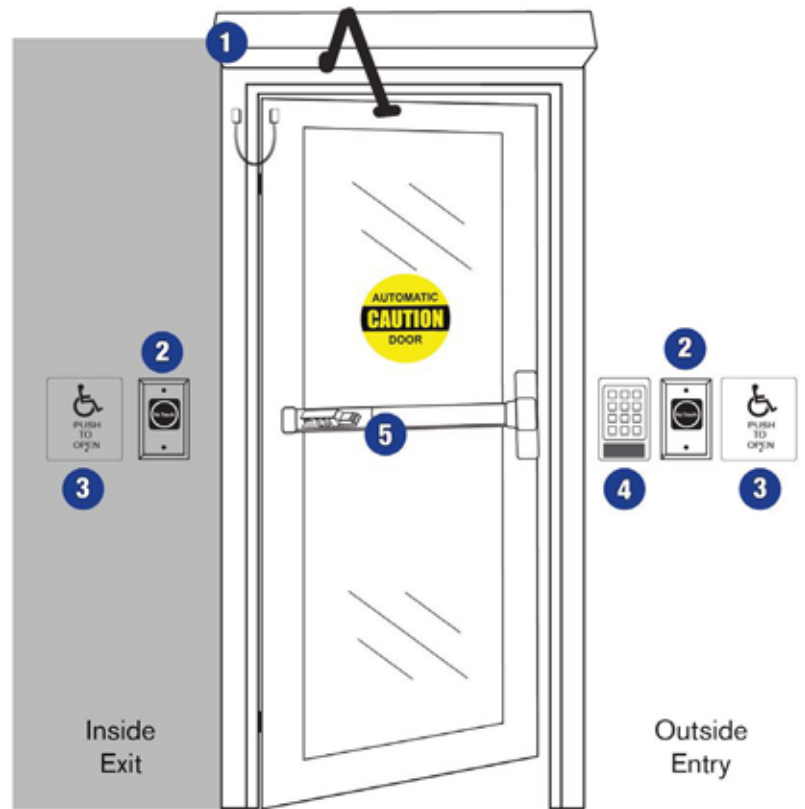
The point is that you can use a basic hands-free door solution as a foundation in combination with other access control and electric locking hardware technologies. Now you can provide a variety of touchless solutions, meeting the need to provide security, fire and life safety, ADA compliance, and the peace of mind needed to help the hospitality industry recover.

Of course, there are other great applications for this touchless door technology approach, including any public restroom, office entrance or door, restaurant kitchen, etc. So, don't limit your thinking about where the opportunities exist.

Finally, note that even with National ANSI and ADA standards, building code enforcement relating to automatic doors and switch placement varies across the country. Consult your local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for compliance requirements. +



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## An ADA-Compliant Latch Retraction Exit Device

Here's an example of an ADA-compliant latch retraction exit device application. If there is an entrance door to a public facility, chances are that it has a mechanical exit device.

You can create a hands-free door solution that is ADA compliant by retrofitting it with Electric Latch Retraction (5), available from many manufacturers for most exit device brands. Pair the bar with Sanitary Touchless Exit Switches (2) and a Low-Energy Swing Door Operator (1) or combine with Anti-microbial ADA Actuators (3) and an Access Control Keypad (4) to provide a convenient, code-compliant, hands-free hygienic and contamination control solution. You will need to include a power transfer device to bring power to the now electrified door exit device.