



A Publication of the Door and Hardware Institute

DOORS AND HARDWARE

OCT
2006



CODES & SPECIFICATIONS

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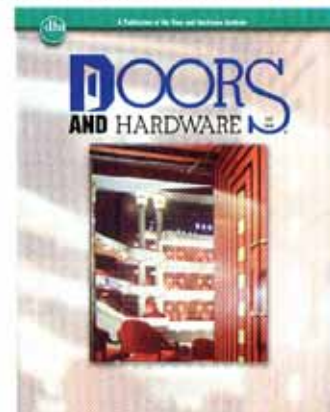
DHI Page: pg. 8

By Bill Johnson

Correction:

In the August 2006 issue of *Doors and Hardware*, on page 68, Comsense, Inc.'s email address was published incorrectly. The correct address is: sales@comsenseinc.com.

DOORS AND HARDWARE



Eggers STC doors feature plain-sliced White Maple veneer, with custom reveals to separate the red and black dyed sections. The center stripe has alternating red dye and hand-applied gold leaf paint. Installed at the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts.



A Farewell note from

**DALE P.
GARRETT, AHC**

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**The History of Outwater Plastics/
Architectural Products By Outwater
Plastics Pg. 35**

Outwater Plastics has been in business for almost 35 years. Learn how one man with a big idea built this company from the ground up.

**Case Study: Opening the Door to
True Universal Access, Flexible
Design Pg. 40**

By Del Williams and Lori Bedard

As the population ages and mobility declines, providing true universal access is becoming a critical task for our industry.

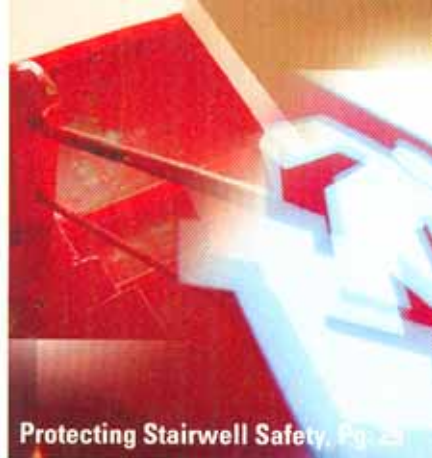
CALENDAR 2006

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Snowbird, UT
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October 28-31, 2006

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Technical Conference*
Las Vegas, NV
www.wdma.com



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Opening the Door to True Universal Access, Flexible Design

BY DEL WILLIAMS AND LORI BEDARD



AS THE POPULATION AGES and mobility declines, providing true universal access is becoming critical. Ever since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), specifiers, architects, designers, engineers, and project managers in a range of industries have striven to comply with the regulation while maximizing architectural appeal and function. But traditional efforts to satisfy ADA code for automatic doors, which require an intentional or “knowing act” switch to be mounted no higher than 48” (1,219.2mm) from the finished floor, have been less than optimum.

For design and specifying professionals, however, a next generation ADA-compliant switch, the Ingress’r manufactured by Wikk Industries, now offers true universal access, flexible design and installation needed by a range of industries including commercial, healthcare, schools and government.

A Gap in Door Access

Though high/low door switches have been commonly implemented to improve access, they can degrade the architectural

integrity of front entrances as well as cause installation and maintenance issues. And using them can still be difficult or impossible for the approximately 10% of wheelchair users who lack sufficient use of their limbs.

“A child in a small wheelchair, for instance, may have to lean out of her chair to reach a high switch or angle a limb just right to trip the low switch,” says Marc Singletary, an Application Engineer for Suwanee, Georgia-based Special Projects Group, Inc., an architectural entrance design and hardware supplier.

Even for the able bodied, high/low switches or other traditional approaches can be less than satisfactory especially when hands are full. “For those carrying items or pushing a cart, for parents with children or strollers, for employees with boxes, paperwork, coffee, keys or access cards, traditional actuators can be inconvenient,” says Singletary.

“Healthcare facilities tend to have heavy fire doors designed to isolate areas,” says Jeanette Peter, a CRNA at a level I trauma center in Southern California. “These can require significant upper body strength to open. Even when

automatic push plates are added, the placement of these can be difficult to access for those with mobility, balance, or flexibility issues."

When healthcare providers or others repeatedly open doors that require awkward body mechanics, they're also at risk of straining or injuring themselves. This is particularly true when they're moving patients or heavy equipment such as beds or carts, which can make opening doors more difficult. "Wheeling a patient down the hall on a heavy bed and leaning over the bed

to open the door takes a toll," says Peter. "When I hurt my right hand, I had to do everything left handed. I've stopped opening doors with my hands and try to use my hips whenever possible."

What's been missing in the architectural market is an automatic door switch that provides the design flexibility to efficiently fulfill any new installation or retrofit project while providing true universal access for those with any level of mobility.

True Universal Access

Architect John Schmidt, who's President of Automated Services and Products, an Oakland, Calif.-based automatic door sales and service company, wanted something better than traditional high/low switches to better accommodate the students on crutches, walkers, even chin-guided gurneys at three California universities.

Schmidt turned to the next genera-



tion Wikk Ingress'r switch, designed to provide broad design flexibility, along with universal door access regardless of mobility. The Ingress'r measures 36 x 6 x 1-1/2" (914 x 152 x 38mm) and was originally designed with input from an architect to avoid the design and access challenges of high/low switches.

Due to the Ingress'r's pillar-like dimensions and fully actionable 2-1/2" (63.5mm) center column, it can be activated and the door opened from any height or angle of approach. When mounted 3" (76.2mm) from the floor, as recommended by the wheelchair and scooter manufacturers consulted, the switch not only complies with U.S. ADA and Canadian guidelines, but also gives unconditional door access to anyone whether they're severely disabled or simply have their hands full.

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"Those in wheelchairs can activate the switch by touching it with a wheelchair footrest," says Schmidt. "Others may bump it at any level with a cane, walker, gurney, hip, foot, elbow, or other body part. The ease of door opening it provides not only gives true universal access for the first time, but also can save doors from the dings, chips, and scratches received when deliverymen bang carts into them trying to enter or exit."

Because the Ingress'r can be activated by a simple touch anywhere along its 2 1/2" (63.5mm) center column, it provides simplified door access to the full range of commercial and health-care stakeholders including visitors, patients, residents, and staff.

"What healthcare facilities have needed is easy door access that responds to good body mechanics," says CRNA Jeanette Peter. "Door openings should be as stress-free as possible for patients, visitors, and staff since gaining access to certain areas, often repeatedly, is a matter of health and necessity."

Better than High/Low Switches

Indiana University began automating doors to comply with ADA standards a number of years ago. "The high/low switches still didn't fully accommodate our campus population, and they required us to install two switch boxes with two sets of wires running back to the controller," says David Walter, an architect with the University Architect's Office, which is responsible for the design, construction, and remodeling of buildings across multiple campuses.

"Water would penetrate into the switches causing them to malfunction in freezing temperatures," adds Walter. "Sometimes straps, backpacks, and coat pockets would catch. Clothing would

get ripped or the push buttons and electrical boxes would get damaged."

When Walter encountered the pillar-like switch, he liked its smooth, one-piece design with 36" (914mm) tall pressure-sensitive push bar. "It follows universal design principles and is about as intuitive and easy-to-use as it gets," says Walter. "That's important not only for people with disabilities but also for foreign students or visitors to the campus who may not understand printed signs."

"Because the Ingress'r switch is beveled with no corners or sharp edges, it's safer than typical switches and there's nothing to get caught on," he adds. "It requires just one electrical box, not two, and is impervious to weather. We use it inside or out equally well on a range of buildings from academic, administrative, and residence halls to athletic facilities and parking garages. It has a timeless design that goes well with anything."

Flexible Design and Installation

Because the switch offers flexible connection options including surface wiring with 1/2" (12.7mm) conduit, wiring from the flush box, and wireless, it simplifies new and retrofit installations.

"The surface wiring option speeds retrofits, the flush box option aids aesthetics and tamper resistance, while the wireless option makes cutting materials like terrazzo unnecessary," says Singletary. "While some push-buttons fit a single gang and some a double gang box, this accommodates both." ■

Del Williams is a technical writer based in Torrance, California. He writes about business, health, technology, and educational issues.

Lori Bedard is President of Wikk Industries Inc., a Greendale, Wisconsin-based designer and manufacturer of automatic door equipment (www.wikk.com).