

The Other Forcible Entry: Thru the Lock

Commercial, Aluminum-Style Doors (“Store Fronts”) w/ Mortise Locks

Size up to determine:

- Location of the action
- Direction of action movement by Mortise lock variation

Keep in mind that a Mortise lock and a Rim lock will appear the same on the cylinder face, however, the back of the cylinder will have a cam on a Mortise lock and a stem on the Rim lock. There are applications of Rim locks on aluminum-style doors but this article is intended for the Mortise lock.

Before removing the Cylinder options:

The “Clock” method

Note the cylinder location is at 6 o'clock before the cylinder is removed. After removal, orient back to 6 o'clock. If the action is at 5 o'clock as shown, depress with your key tool and rotate to the 7 o'clock.



Keyway Orientation

Note the location of the keyway before removing the cylinder. The premise of this method of size-up is as follows, if the keyway is found off center toward the bottom of the cylinder then after removing the cylinder the action can be found down. If the keyway is found off center of the cylinder, toward the top, then my action is up.

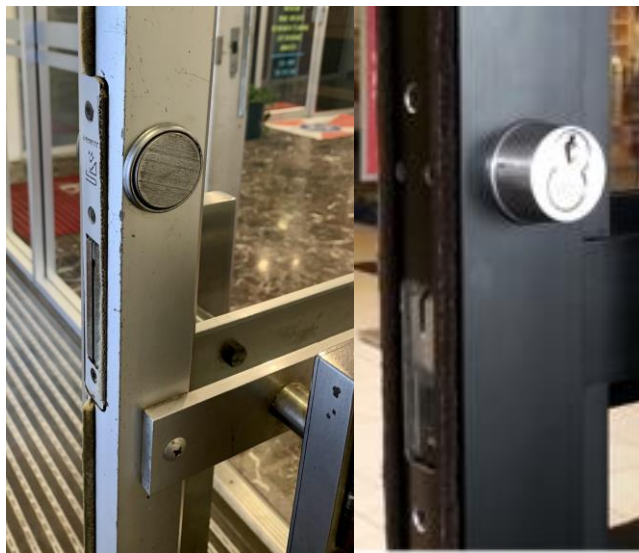


Cylinder in Relation to the Throw

No matter how the mortise lock is installed on the aluminum-stile door (“Store Front”) the orientation of the cylinder, throw and action can not be changed. Prior to or after removing the cylinder, identify the location of the cylinder in relation to the throw; the action will fall in between.



There are circumstances where the “Clock” method or Keyway Orientation can not be determined due to the installation of a “dummy” cylinder. Another circumstance is when the keyway has no relation to the location of the action.



Determining the Location of the Throw

When faced with circumstances where the action cannot be identified by traditional means then determine the location of the throw in relation to the cylinder; the action will fall in between. Methods include visualization of the throw in the reveal, sliding a shove knife in the reveal or opening up the reveal with a pry tool; the Rex tool with a pry end works well. There also might be visual indicators such as a strike plate or electric strike for the deadlatch lock or indications of wear from the throw striking frame.



Mortise Lock Styles

The Deadlatch



The Deadlatch can be identified on the outside by the presence of a strike plate or electric strike or, from the interior, a paddle or handle. After cylinder removal, there will be a hook on the back of the cage that moves the action when using the paddle or handle on the interior. The action will be away from the latch side of the door. The latch is spring loaded and re-engages the throw after releasing. When manipulating this type of lock with a key tool hold the action and open the door before releasing. Then chock the door to prevent the latch from re-engaging.

The Short Throw Deadlock



The Short Throw extends a deadbolt into the door frame. A variation of the Short Throw includes the patch lock found on a narrow-stile or all glass door. The Patch lock can be installed on a top rail application, extending a bolt into the header, or on a bottom rail, extending a bolt into the threshold. Note the cam, at the back of the cylinder opening, of the interior cylinder. The action will be away from the latch side of the door.

The Pivoting Deadlock



The Pivoting Deadlock rotates a deadbolt, from inside the lock cage, into the door frame. After removing the cylinder the presence of a swing arm, with a “pear-shaped or lightbulb cutout, indicates the pivoting deadbolt. The action will be away from the latch side indicating the deadbolt is activated. Going against natural instinct, the action to release the throw, with the key tool, is toward the latch side of the door. Using the flat side of the key tool, insert inline with the swing arm for location and orientation to the action.