



Western Connecticut State University
WESTCONNECT Card Office
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Break Glass Training

Enhanced security for academic classrooms allows professors and students the ability to lock their classroom doors from the inside of the rooms in an emergency situation. Historically, classrooms were not locked, however, with the addition of instructional technology, classrooms began to be locked when not in use to protect these resources. However, these rooms were not designed with the idea of locking the door from inside the room. Unfortunately, the ability to lock classrooms from the inside, without having to go out into the hallway, became a security requirement for WestConn in response to several campus tragedies at other institutions, including the Virginia Tech. shootings. In March, 2009, the WestConnect department began to install the new break glass devices on those classrooms with card access security systems. In order to break the glass, the hammer attached to the device with a chain, is used to shatter the glass. This action returns the door locking mechanism (called an electric strike) to its locked state and an alarm is sent to the University Police Department. There will be no local, audible alarm. This action also stops the card reader from working for entry into the room. There is always free egress out of the rooms. In other words, by breaking the glass, the door will still allow you to leave from inside the room; you will not be locked into the room. However, a person on the hallway side of the closed and locked door, cannot open the door.

These devices are to be used in an emergency, life safety situation only. In the event of an emergency you should also call 911. Do not assume that the break glass is the only action or notification needed. 911 calls can provide additional, useful information to responders.

Some helpful tips:

- Swing the metal attachment with the same motion you would a regular hammer. Do not attempt to poke or jab the glass.
- The door must be physically closed in order to be secured. If you break the glass before the door is closed, simply pull the door shut and it will be secure.
- Once you lock the room, do not attempt to go out into the hallway. You will not be able to re-enter the room with your card. The door can only be unlocked via a physical master key. The University Police Department have this key.

In the best case scenario, these devices will never be used. However, as a community we need to be prepared for emergencies. These devices are not meant to hinder the open-campus concept that makes a state university thrive, but rather viewed as a safety precaution, should one be needed.

If you have additional questions about the system or the devices, please contact the WestConnect Office in Old Main.