

HAND THE DOOR

The “Hand” of a door designates the direction of the swing of the door. Correctly “handing” an opening or an item of hardware is an essential skill that you need to acquire to work in the door and hardware industry.

The Hand is determined *as viewed from the outside* of the building, room or space to which the doorway leads, *by the position of the hinges* on a door in terms of right or left, and *by the in-ward or out-ward direction* of swing.

The *outside* of a door is considered the *secure* side, so that’s why that position is used as the “viewpoint” when describing the handing of the door. First identify which side of the opening is the secure side; i.e.: from which side would you unlock the door if you were entering the space?

There are four possible directions of door swings to consider, denoted by abbreviated codes: **Right Hand (RH)**, **Left Hand (LH)**, **Right Hand Reverse (RHR)** and **Left Hand Reverse (LHR)**.

Recall that the handing is determined from the *outside* or *secure* side of the door. Picture yourself standing in a corridor facing an office door:

RIGHT AND LEFT HAND, or “TO”

Right Hand (RH)- hinges on the right, door swings **into** the office

Left Hand (LH) hinges on the left, door swings **into** the office

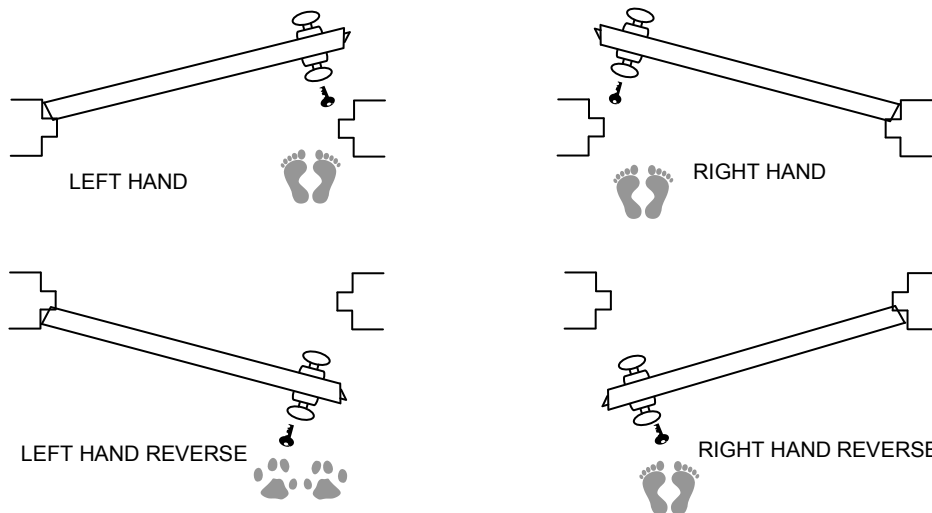
The word “**TO**” may be used to describe a **RH** or **LH** opening (e.g., hallway **to** office.)

RIGHT HAND REVERSE AND LEFT HAND REVERSE, or “FROM”

Right Hand Reverse (RHR) hinges on the right, door swings backwards **from** the office

Left Hand Reverse (LHR) the hinges are on the left, door swings backwards **from** the office

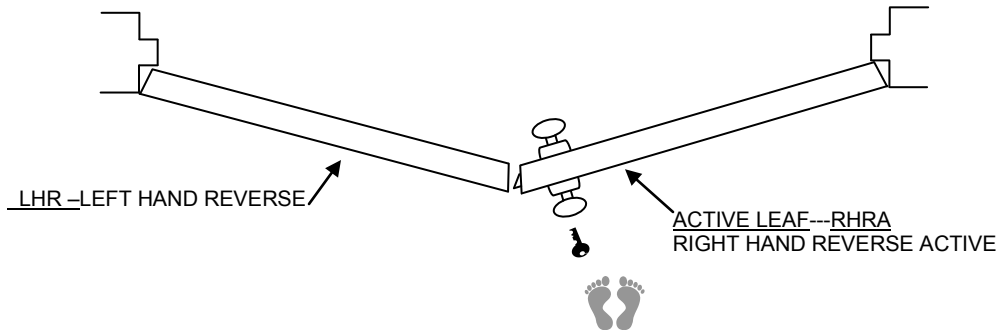
The word “**FROM**” may be used to describe a **RHR** or **LHR** opening (e.g., hallway **from** office.)



PAIRS OF DOORS

Pairs of doors are handed in the same way as single-door openings, but one door is designated as the **active leaf**. The leaf that has the lock is the **active leaf**.

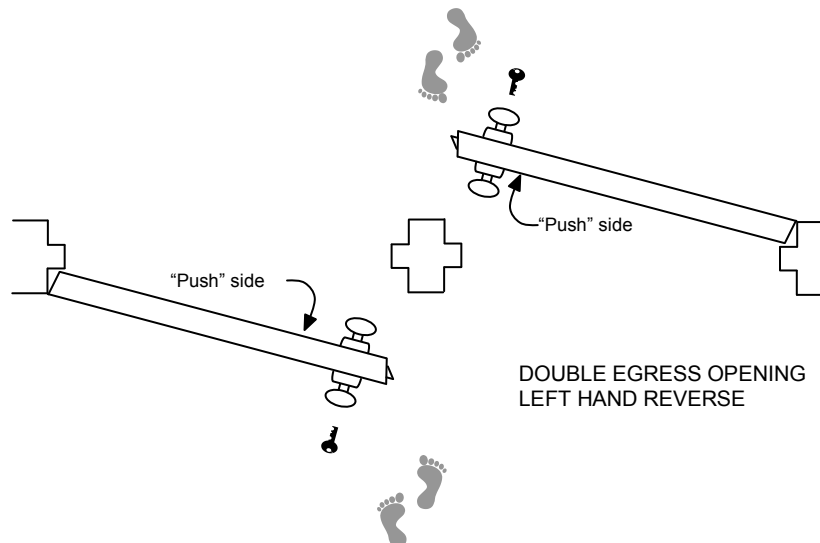
For example, a paired opening with a lock installed on the right hand leaf, swinging into the space, would be referred to as **right hand active (RHA)**. If the leaf wings outward from the space, it is a **right hand reverse active (RHRA)**.



DOUBLE-EGRESS OPENINGS

A double-egress opening is a paired opening with the door leaves swinging in *opposite directions*. They are typically installed in corridors and will be fire-rated.

Most double-egress openings are handed as left hand reverse by left hand reverse (LHR/LHR). Since people tend to walk on the right side of a corridor, the traffic approaches the door from the push side, and can proceed without having to stop to pull the door open. A second reason for handing double-egress doors as reverse openings is that fire exit hardware is only available in reverse hands.



DOUBLE-ACTING OPENINGS

Double-acting (DA) doors swing both inward and outward. Despite the appearance that they don't need to be handed, you still need a handing designation for the "secure" side.

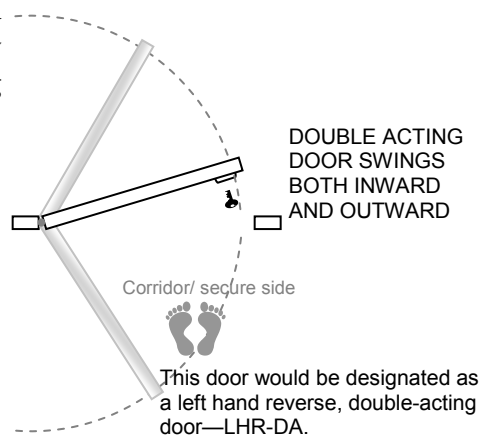
The notation is as follows:

Right hand double-acting **RH-DA**

Right hand reverse double-acting **RHR-DA**

Left hand double-acting **LH-DA**

Left hand reverse double-acting **LHR-DA**



Why "Hand"?

Strictly speaking, the door itself is either right or left hand. The handing convention is universally followed to prevent any confusion as to which side is the outside or inside of the door. Then the hardware can be mounted correctly. The Hardware and the frame will also be indicated with the hand.

For a particular doorway, all the handing information for frame, door, and hardware needs to be compatible for the door to operate. Many items of hardware have a "right side up" requirement, must be on either the inside or outside of the door, and must align and interact with other parts. You can see that the frame would also have a hand designation, so that the hinge and strike preps are done on the correct side.

Another factor in handing is the fire safety code (the Life Safety Code, published by the National Fire Protection Association NFPA) that requires that doors swing in the direction of getting out of a building or space. You will notice that entrance/exit doors in commercial and public buildings open *outward* from the building. In an emergency situation where evacuation is needed, you want the door to open in the direction people will be traveling!

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