

# How to prevent unauthorized key duplication

Keep your keys and locks safe

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School security administrators know how costly it can be to re-key locks. By taking just a few precautions, you can avoid this expense. However, the cost of not re-keying when your system has been compromised may actually cost far more in the long run than the cost to re-key your facility.

Industry standards for re-keying locks may seem a bit complicated. The need to re-key locks depends on a number of factors, including the size of your building, number of employees who work in the building, number of staff members who have (or have had) keys, how much foot traffic you have through the building, etc.

Some security officials advocate changing locks once every other year. Such frequency is not always practical, nor is it always necessary. To avoid re-keying frequently, you need to implement and adhere to tight key restrictions.

Security guidelines call for ALWAYS re-keying locks:

- After a break-in or theft
- After theft of keys to the building
- After an employee loses a key
- If an employee quits without returning assigned keys
- After terminating a key-holding employee

You may have valid concerns about the use of keys on school premises, and who has access to keys at any given time. Controlling who has keys to your facilities can be difficult and time-consuming. Oftentimes, mistakes are made and keys get lost by employees. Restricted keyways may be the answer if you need to maintain control over keys to your facilities and access to locks.

Restricted keyways are keyways (the part of the key cylinder that the key is inserted into) and key blanks (the uncut brass key) that have strict limitations on use and distribution. When you purchase a restricted keyway system, you actually purchase a certain level of security because key copies can only be made under very specific circumstances and only by certain companies.

When you purchase this type of system, you must specify the number of keys you want that will open the building's locks. Once the locks have been installed, new keys cannot be made by the local locksmith. You can get new copies of keys only by presenting an authorization card to an authorized locksmith or ordering duplicate keys through a mail-in authorization process.

Typically, the lock system's manufacturer issues an authorization card. The locksmith must contact the company that issued the authorization card to get permission to copy the key. A restricted key blank will be sent to the locksmith who will then make the duplicate.

Without the agreement, no locksmith can duplicate a key. Instead, you must contact the supplier of the lock system with a key number that is stamped on the key and request that the supplier send duplicate keys.

The restricted keyway is a good idea if you do not need a complicated and expensive security system. The system provides a way to control who can make copies of keys to the school's premises. Plus, a restricted keyway makes it extremely difficult or impossible for employees to make unauthorized copies of keys. You have peace of mind knowing an employee cannot make extra copies.

### The battle with lock tampering

As fast as lock manufacturers are producing more tamper-resistant and pick-proof locks, criminals are coming up with ways to pick them. Few locks qualify as "pick-proof," but some locks are more resistant to picking than others.

The best way to avoid tampering with locks on your facilities is to discourage the criminal act in the first place. Here are some tips to help you prevent tampering before it happens:

- Brand matters: ALWAYS choose reliable, trusted brand names. Lock pickers know locks, and they know brands. They know which manufacturers make inferior-quality products and those that are easiest to pick
- Choose stronger models: Install heavy-duty locks that are more tamper-resistant than standard or medium-duty locks
- Install mortise-style locks: Mortise locks are stronger and harder to pick. They are also harder to install. But the trade-off for better security may be worth it in the long run
- Make sure doors are visible: Criminals avoid doors that have clear sightlines to the street, other buildings, etc. The more visible the door is to other people, the less likely your facility will be targeted in the first place. Use landscaping to your advantage: keep bushes and hedges trimmed. Make sure no trees block any sightlines to the entrance. Always make sure doors are well lit

Many key and commercial hardware suppliers have key control solutions that can be tailored to fit the needs of your facilities. Security companies are able to do "security audits" and make recommendations based on those findings.

## Learn more about key systems

Learn about getting more control over your keys, please visit [http://us.allegion.com/Products/Keysystems/schlage\\_key\\_systems](http://us.allegion.com/Products/Keysystems/schlage_key_systems). To reach a professional security consultant in your area, please call **888.758.9823** or fill out the **Contact Us** form on our website at [allegion.com](http://allegion.com).

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