Using key control to build security into design

Today, the security of a facility is as much a part of the design as any other element. Architects consider everything from the exterior grounds, lighting and parking lot layout to surveillance equipment, door hardware and security systems.

Unfortunately, sometimes security isn’t considered until late in the process, which can pose challenges depending on the desires of your client. Allegion makes it easy to integrate security planning early—with minimal impact to your construction budget. We’ll help you increase the effectiveness of security measures so you can design a secure building to your client’s specifications.

Electronic and mechanical security solutions

Many commercial buildings today have electronic security solutions that monitor and track egress by person, door and even timestamp. They provide enhanced security that is convenient for both the property manager and the end users. While electronic locks are becoming a more common security solution in commercial and institutional applications, they generally require a means of key override and so must still be considered when designing the overall keying system.

Electronic access control solutions and mechanical locks are often used together throughout a building. In fact, depending on the use of the space and who needs access to it, it can be more efficient and cost-effective to use a mechanical solution to control keys at the user level. A single keying system can be designed to meet any level of security to protect specific rooms, buildings or entire campuses. Open keyways offer the convenience of key duplication while patented, restricted keyways help manage key control and are more resistant to bypass and physical attack. An Allegion Spec Writer can help you evaluate the necessary security design for every opening.

Importance of key control

Locks only limit access to a building if you control the keys that operate them. That is, if you have a tracking system for issued keys, no keys are missing or allowed to be duplicated without authorization, and all are retrieved when people leave the company. That’s why you should advise clients to select a master key system protected with patented keys whenever a mechanical solution best fits their needs.

Understanding a master key system

A master key system elevates a facility’s access control by providing a group of keys that are designated by opening or area within the building. This is done by differentiating the pins in the cylinder and the cuts on the key to provide access to specific locks throughout the facility. The three main types of keys in a master key system include:

- A grand master, which can be made to open all the facility’s keyed locks
- A master key that opens a group of locks, such as all maintenance areas
- Single keys that are cylinder-specific and only open certain doors

Additionally, businesses with high employee turnover may consider a locking system that utilizes interchangeable cores. That way, if a key is lost or if an employee leaves without returning their key, you can remove the core and insert a new one in a matter of minutes without taking the entire lock off the door. This prevents the lost or stolen key from working in your locks, and you won’t have to wait for a locksmith to come.
Benefits of a patented, restricted key system
You can fortify your client's mechanical lock choice with a key control system. A patented key system is the foundation for any secure access control system because the patent protects the key design from being copied by any other manufacturer. By also restricting the keyway, distribution of the key blanks is limited to authorized recipients and controlled and tracked at the manufacturer level.

Building value at a lower cost
While the application of a single keyway family makes long-term maintenance more convenient, a one-size-fits-all approach is seldom desired when it comes to selecting levels of physical security and administrative protection offered by various cylinder types. When the highest levels of security are needed, consider a solution that lets customers gain the use of geographic exclusivity on the key design and the ability to apply UL 437 listed high security cylinders. Geographic exclusively can be based on a localized area or broader. End users can even own the key design on a nationwide basis. UL 437 listed cylinders are tested and proven to provide the highest levels of physical security in a cylinder that's designed to withstand extreme attack.

More value, lower cost
The best time to consider a patented key system for door hardware—and provide the greatest value for your client's investment—is during the early stages of design, rather than after a building has been constructed. Integrating security into the early design saves time and money for all involved by ensuring the most optimum system is chosen and can be properly applied throughout the space. Contact a spec writer today and let us help you design a secure facility built on control, convenience and cost-effectiveness.

Everest 29 patented key system
- Provides patent protection until 2029
- Patented design created with unique, through-cut technology
- Required letters of authorization restrict distribution
- Conventional, and both full-size and small format interchangeable core cylinder formats
- Can be upgraded to Primus XP levels of key control security for critical points of entry
- Backward compatibility with current Everest B, C and D keyways

Primus XP
- Provides patent protection to Schlage Classic open keyways until 2024
- High-security UL437-compliant cylinders are available for additional protection from cylinder bypass techniques like bumping, picking and drilling
- The unique side-bit milling on Primus XP keys allows creation of geographically exclusive keys in thousands of available combinations

About Allegion
Allegion (NYSE: ALLE) is a global pioneer in safety and security, with leading brands like CISA®, Interflex®, LCN®, Schlage®, SimonsVoss® and Von Duprin®. Focusing on security around the door and adjacent areas, Allegion produces a range of solutions for homes, businesses, schools and other institutions. Allegion is a $2 billion company, with products sold in almost 130 countries. For more, visit www.allegion.com.