Save Time, Save Money
Find out how KeyTrak can help alleviate concerns about lawsuits.

The Need for Key Security
Rental property managers know the importance of managing key security. Unfortunately, common routines currently used by many property owners do not promote key security. Keys are left unattended, in drawers or boxes that are easily broken into. A KeyTrak system can decrease liability and increase protection against lawsuits.

A Landlord’s Liability
In a legal sense, rental property managers have a responsibility to prevent foreseeable criminal conduct. A landlord “may be held liable to tenants for foreseeable criminal conduct if he fails to provide reasonably adequate locks.” (Brichacek v. Hiskey Apartments, 85-1502 of the Supreme Court of Iowa) Because of this ruling, a landlord may also be held responsible for not providing adequate security.

The Consumer Protection Act presumes that a consumer (or resident) has a reasonable expectation that services (such as security) will be provided if there is representation to that effect. If the landlord provides locks for the apartment, thus implying a reasonable degree of safety, then the landlord is continuing his or her implied warranty of security by also keeping extra keys and the master key from getting into the hands of the wrong person.

Costs of a Lawsuit
Lawsuits are expensive. There are endless hours of unproductive management time spent in court and harmful office gossip. Losing a positive reputation for a property or for management can further hurt a business. Insurance rates can escalate or a cancellation notice can be received.

To substantially reduce the possibility of a lawsuit, landlords must first recognize that first, it is their duty to keep keys secure, and second, they should reasonably conduct their daily affairs to satisfy the standard of care being imposed by this duty.

Philip Wayne, Security Specialist
Philip Wayne, president of Philip B. Wayne Consultants, Inc. of Denver, Colorado, is known for his expertise in reducing the incidence of gangs, drugs and prostitution in crime-infected properties. A frequent instructor to owners, managers and law enforcement agencies, Wayne developed the well-known S.W.A.T. program for rental properties. Philip Wayne believes that there are several things necessary to control keys for a property.

Computerized Key Control
The best solution is to utilize one of several key management systems available. When analyzing a key control system for a property, several basic components are essential:

- The system must be automatic. If creating a log depends upon optional operator action, the system’s credibility and authenticity are challenged.
- Key activity reports are a must. These become the primary source in litigation or resident accusation. The system must record when a key is removed and returned.
- Report generators should be contained within the system and should not be dependent upon other office equipment.
- It should not be possible to misplace keys.
- The system should be easy to learn and quick to use.
- Keys must be secure when the cabinet door or drawer is open, allowing only the selected key to be removed. It should be impossible to remove any key without automatically creating a record of the transaction.
- Only authorized persons should have access to the system. A worthy addition is a lockout feature that allows keys to be removed after hours only by those who are authorized to do so.
- The key storage cabinet should be constructed to prevent forced entry and should be attached to a secure surface.

The Solution
Wayne’s research on key management systems surprisingly revealed few that qualified. The system that best fits the criteria is KeyTrak, Inc. Based in College Station, Texas, KeyTrak is the only system that passed the hundreds of security and safety tests needed to obtain the coveted Underwriters Laboratories rating.

KeyTrak has captured the essence of a sound key management system, and also offers many additional features that enhance its overall value to the industry. Valuable considerations to the KeyTrak system include a work order system, a prospect data tracking system that is integrated with a follow-up letter program, an employee time clock, and an appliance or equipment warranty watch system called Unit Inventory.

KeyTrak, Inc. Has the Answer
Protecting businesses and reputations is easier with the KeyTrak system. KeyTrak proves that in the event a key was used unlawfully, a landlord or his or her employees were not responsible. KeyTrak’s precise key reports show that keys for a particular property were safely secured during the time a questionable event occurred.

Key Control is a Necessity
Wayne particularly likes the prospect data entry program, because it is very safe. Only in the rental property business does the job description require that strangers be taken to quiet places without witnesses or the ability to communicate with others. By requiring information about the prospects in advance of showing the property, any ideas of impropriety are left in the leasing office.

Wayne believes in using the best system available, one that provides a reasonable degree of security, which when put to the test will equal or exceed the rental property industry’s standard of care.