

Want to Keep Your Residents Safe? Protect Your Keys

From marketing to leasing to hiring, a lot goes into running a multifamily property. But while all these are important, you could be putting your property and residents at risk by neglecting another critical aspect of your operations: key control.

Properly securing and tracking your keys is a crucial part of providing a good experience for your residents and ensuring their safety. If apartment keys frequently go missing or are used for unauthorized reasons, that's a huge security violation. Put yourself in your residents' shoes: What key management method would you feel most comfortable with? Would you feel safe having your home key handled the way your property manages residents' keys?

Having an effective key and access control solution should be a top priority for every multifamily property. There are plenty of options, but let's look at the pros and cons of the most common ones.

Master Keys

Using master keys is a longstanding practice in the industry. It's easy to see why since there are fewer keys to keep track of. However, it's difficult to track how someone uses each key, which is a liability for your property. For example, if someone removes a master key to enter apartment #221, you can't prove they didn't use the key to enter apartment #102 instead. Also, consider the cost and hassle of rekeying every unit if a key goes missing.

Manual Processes

Like many organizations, your property might be working with a limited budget. If that's the case, you might gravitate to an inexpensive key control solution such as a pegboard or wall-mounted metal cabinet. But manual key management methods aren't secure. After all, anyone can remove a key from a hook or pry open a cabinet.

It's also difficult to keep an accurate key log. All it takes is an employee forgetting to update the log once for your records to be

inaccurate. Without a reliable audit trail, it'll be challenging to investigate situations where residents feel their safety or privacy has been violated.

Electronic Key Control Systems

Electronic key control systems consist of wall-mounted panels or electronic drawers that automatically record when someone removes a key. Since managers have the ability to set up user permissions, the systems reduce the likelihood of human error. Systems made of sturdy materials such as tamper-proof steel also keep keys more secure than pegboards or basic metal cabinets. The biggest drawback is the learning curve, but a good technology partner will offer training and ongoing support.

Smart Locks

Smart locks — which work with codes, fobs, or smartphones — are popular with residents and property managers alike. But while they have some perks, like being able to grant access to apartments remotely, they don't remove the need for key control. You likely still have physical keys to common areas, offices, or storage closets. Even if you eliminate every traditional lock on your property, you still need to manage security tokens the same way you manage physical keys.

To decide which method is right for you, ask the following questions:

- Can you restrict access to authorized employees only?
- Can you maintain an accurate audit trail?
- How will you ensure employees follow your key control policies?
- What administrative tasks are included in your key control solution, and who will be responsible for handling them?

When you're managing a multifamily community, countless tasks take up your time and attention. It's easy to push certain responsibilities, like key control, to the backburner. However, key management isn't just about keys. It's about the residents who call your property home — and developing an effective key control solution is worth the investment.



Because you're protecting more than keys.

KNOW
who has your keys.

PROTECT
your property.

MAINTAIN
your residents' trust.

To learn more, visit keytrak.com/iaa or call 866.916.5000 to connect with your local KeyTrak representative.