It's Time to Clean Up Your Key Management

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Spring cleaning is a time-honored tradition that helps you ensure your multifamily community is in tip-top shape. In addition to the usual tasks — whether it's deep cleaning the leasing office, clearing out the winter leaves, or power washing buildings — spring cleaning is also an opportunity for you to address specific process issues that have come up throughout the year. One such issue is sloppy key management.

Disorganized keys disrupt the daily operations of the property and frustrate staff, as they waste time looking for the right key instead of focusing on other tasks. This can also put residents at risk if employees misplace a key or if someone intentionally removes a key they're not authorized to have.

So what can you do to organize your keys and clean up your key management practices? Start with these three tips.

1. Do a key audit.

Round up all your keys, including common area keys and spare apartment keys. Are there any missing? If so, who last had them? Make sure all keys are accounted for. If any resident keys are missing, notify them and rekey their doors immediately. In the future, consider using an electronic key control system to track your keys. You'll be able to quickly identify which keys were checked out, who removed them, and when they were returned. This information can be used to quickly find keys and identify any other issues affecting your key management processes.

2. Organize your keys.

Do your staff have to sort through keys on a pegboard or refer to a complicated numbering system to locate the keys they need? Try storing keys in an electronic drawer-based system that tracks each key's location in the drawer via a computerized key tag. When an employee requests a key, the key tag will light up so they can find it quickly. When they return it, the system will recognize the key tag, so employees don't have to worry about returning it to a specific slot.

To help you identify keys when they're out of the system, print a label with a unique QR code and attach those to each key tag. You can scan that QR code with your key control provider's mobile app to determine which door the key goes to.

3. Ditch manual processes.

Do your employees still have to fill out a manual key log when they need a key? Instead, use an automated key management system, which is at least twice as fast as a manual process. You also won't have to worry about an employee forgetting to write down when they took a key. If someone doesn't return a key on time, the system will send you a text or email alert including the name of the employee who last checked the key out and what time they took it from the system. This will not only save you time tracking down missing keys but also keep residents safe.

Improving your key management processes is one of the most important things you can do for your property. To get started, visit **keytrak.com/louisiana**.