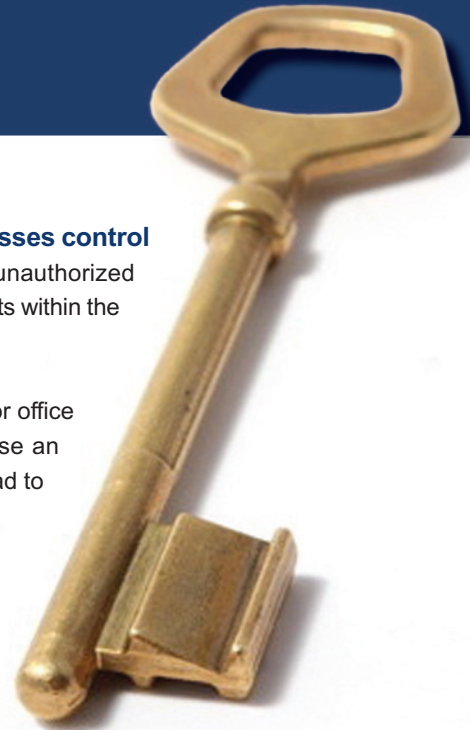


# KEY CONTROL.



**Key control is an organized and formal security system which addresses control of master keys within a building or facility.** Key control prevents unauthorized access using documentation management and status reporting of critical elements within the master key system.

Although key control is a mundane task, it is a vital responsibility in a housing or office environment. Failure to implement an effective key control system could cause an individual or the agency to suffer serious harm or property loss. It could also lead to a liability lawsuit.

It is tempting to use locks that will accept master keys, but doing so is a poor practice as it increases risk enormously. It is possible to lose a master key. Although reputable locksmiths will not make a duplicate of a master key, copies can be made. Manufacturers of master keyed locks sell keys to the many purchasers of those locks. Therefore other people will have copies. Imagine an agency where everyone has a master key with access to all consumer records as well as human resource files!

**The following are some important aspects to review and discuss regarding a key control program:**

***The critical elements of a facility's security are:***

- Physical keys (either issued keys or stored keys)
- Key holders
- Physical locations
- Information on the products used in a location

***Important key control questions you should know the answers to:***

- What keying system is in place?
- What keys do you have?
- What keys have been issued?
- What keys are not accounted for?
- Where are the keys?
- Who has them?
- Where did they go?

***Key system management and control risks:***

***A facility is at risk if it has...***

- No introduction/program of effective key management
- No administration backup for key management
- Lack of or insufficient record keeping policies
- Inaccurate documentation on lost/stolen keys

**Successful key control is accomplished by:**

- Adopting a formal key control policy
- Developing formal monitoring and reporting
- Addressing key control as a long-term commitment

**Key control systems fail due to:**

- Lack of dedicated effort
- Viewed as an overwhelming task
- No formal written/approved policy
- Lack of discipline in maintaining information
- Inconsistent input of information
- Lack of dedication to maintaining the system
- Lack of enforceable authority

Making an investment in key control is a complex decision. The cost of potential litigation defense may be reduced. Good key management, the ability to analyze key usage data and enforce policies contribute to the operational efficiency. Similar to an alarm system, having implemented a key control system will provide your agency with piece of mind.

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