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Establishing a Key Control Policy will Enhance Security

Parishes and schools can improve security by establishing a key control policy. The first step toward key control is developing an adequate method to key each building. A building can be keyed in a number of different ways, but not all are effective. Listed below is information on how a physical plant should be keyed.

A Variety of Keys

- *Great grand master key* – This key opens executive offices, all building, and all locks. Great grand master keys should be kept by top personnel (for example, the pastor or the principal).
- *Grand master key* – This key opens all buildings and all locks, with the exception of executive offices. Distribute grand master keys to top personnel or highly trusted employees (for example, the pastor, principal, or plant manager).
- *Sub master key* – This key opens all locks in a specific building. Distribute this key to employees who have responsibilities which require a sub-master key for each building.
- *Common keys* – These keys are for individual interior doors like offices, classrooms, or storage rooms. Distribute these keys to employees for their own offices or classrooms.

Stamp all master keys, "Do not duplicate," to prevent copying. Unfortunately, this stamp is not always effective, as some unethical key duplicators will copy any standard key.

Restricted Keys

One way to prevent your keys from being duplicated is to purchase restricted keys. A worldwide Swedish organization, ASSA, produces keys which cannot be duplicated anywhere other than where the key was purchased and then, only by the original purchaser. By using restricted keys, if all keys are returned when employees terminate employment, one is assured there are not extra keys in the wrong hands. This could save re-keying the entire physical plant. Information about restricted keys should be available from your local locksmith.

Key Logs

Another positive step is establishing a key log. Each key in the key log can be checked out by authorized personnel when required. The log should include why the key is being used, who is using the key, and when it will be returned. Keep all keys in a locked cabinet and controlled by one person.

Card Access Systems

An ideal way to increase security for your facility is to install a card access system. With this type of system, you can control access to any part of a building without worrying about extra keys floating around. Each employee/volunteer/student is simply given a card which will limit access to areas on an "as needed" basis which is predetermined by management. You can also control when an individual would have access to the building based on the time of day, day of the week, etc.

Each card has its own specific number which is assigned to an individual. The cards can be programmed on different levels to provide access much like a grand master, sub-master, etc. standard key would provide. If a card happened to be lost or stolen, it can quickly be removed from the system once management is notified without having to re-key the facility.

The added benefit of this system is that a detailed printout can be obtained at anytime listing the times, dates, and locations that a card had been used; thus allowing you to better monitor who is entering and what is happening in your facility.

The costs of these systems can vary depending on the type of system installed, the number of doors involved, and the number of users. The initial investment is often well worth the increased security it provides for your facility.

Remember Other Precautions

Finally, while adequate key control is essential, it is important to ensure that all windows and other entry points are adequately secured. Install proper lighting, locks and alarms. Catholic Mutual's Risk Management Department can assist you with these additional subjects.

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