

Health Information Compliance Alert

Reader Questions: One Key to Facility Security: Keys

Question: We want to use the same locks on all our facility's interior doors. The keys to unlock the inside and outside doors would be different. Could this arrangement result in a privacy or security violation?

Oregon subscriber

Answer: "Yes," asserts **Lee Kelly**, senior health care security consultant with Fortrex Technologies in Frederick, MD. Problem: "If all your internal doors are keyed with the same lock, then any person with the key has access to everything," he points out. And if someone loses his set, you'll have to reissue keys for your entire workforce.

Better solution: "Base your lock system on departments," Kelly suggests. That way, a person in radiology doesn't have access to information kept in the maternity department, he explains.

The Bottom Line: While one key for your interior doors would be convenient, it could destroy your security compliance. Once you key each department with separate locks, task department supervisors with deciding if further locks are necessary, Kelly advises.