

Keys & Locks: Residential Buildings

Effective Date: July 1, 2007

Policy Statement

This policy summarizes the procedures for installing, supplying, securing and maintaining keys and locks for apartments and residential buildings owned and managed by Columbia University Facilities. This policy does not apply to undergraduate residence halls and fraternity buildings. Residents in these buildings should refer to the student Guide to Living. Although procedures may vary from building to building, this policy outlines the requirements that are basic to every building and apartment. The policy is organized according to the phases of occupancy as follows: initial move-in, maintenance during occupancy, and vacancy.

Reasons for the Policy

This policy is in place to support cooperation between the University and residents in providing and maintaining a safe and secure housing environment. Keys and locks are the most critical component in providing University residents with a secure home. The policy outlines the University's responsibilities, as building owner and manager, to maintain a secure building and apartment. Residents and the University community are also informed of their responsibilities to support these efforts. The policy will also inform residents of possible charges they may incur for lost keys, lockouts, etc.

Primary Guidance to Which This Policy Responds

This policy is guided by and complies with the New York State Multiple Dwelling Law and the New York City Housing Maintenance Code. It is also modeled after standard practice within the property management industry in New York.

Responsible University Office & Officer

Columbia University Facilities is responsible for the maintenance of this policy and for responding to questions and concerns related to locks and keys in residential spaces. The Assistant Vice President for Residential Operations is the Responsible Officer. Questions related to a specific building should be directed to the appropriate superintendent or Director for Residential Services.

Revision History

There is currently no revision history for this policy.

Who Is Governed By This Policy

Employees (and contractors) of Columbia University Facilities who are responsible for maintaining the safety and security of residential buildings and apartments are governed by this policy. This includes building superintendents, building staff, office staff, Directors for Residential Services, and project managers that work for University Apartment Housing and Residential Services. In addition, residents living in University buildings and their guests are governed by this policy.

Who Should Know This Policy

Senior Executive Officers, Vice Presidents, Directors, Project Managers, Senior Administrative Officers, Leasing Administrators and staff, Building and Grounds Personnel, and contractors that manage, supervise, lease, or otherwise do work in University residential properties must know this policy. Residents living in University buildings and their guests should be familiar with this policy.

Exclusions & Special Situations

Security procedures and policies vary from building to building and this policy is not designed to define these differences. Different types of keys are used in different buildings, for example. Also, in some buildings, door attendants or security guards provide security that is otherwise provided by a locking entrance door. This policy outlines common requirements that are basic to every building and apartment. Residents should contact their superintendent or Director for Residential Services with any questions.

This policy does not apply to undergraduate residence halls and fraternity buildings. Residents in these buildings should refer to the student Guide to Living for policies related to keys and locks in those buildings.

Policy Text

The administration and maintenance of locks and keys begins with the resident's initial move-in to a building and apartment and ends when the resident vacates and surrenders keys. The policy is organized according to the phases of occupancy as follows: initial move-in, maintenance during occupancy, and vacancy.

Building Security and Initial Move-In

Building Security

All entrances to a residential building have a door that can be securely locked. The **main (front) entrance** to a building is usually secured with a Medeco cylinder or cylinder of similar quality. There are some exceptions to this in buildings that have 24-hour door attendants or security guards.

Apartment entrance doors are likewise usually secured with a Medeco-type cylinder and the locksets for apartment entrance doors generally have a deadbolt for enhanced security.

Key Distribution on Initial Move-In

Upon signing a lease for an apartment, new residents will be issued a key card form that is generally presented to the building superintendent or building staff member. The **key card form** introduces the resident as a legal occupant, authorizes the superintendent to allow the new resident to move in to the specified unit and building and to give the new resident a set of keys.

A minimum of one (1) set of the following keys are given to each new resident: **building entrance door, apartment door, and mailbox lock**. In some buildings, where necessary, residents may also receive keys for the following: elevator release keys, laundry and/or storage room, garbage collection areas. This will vary from building to building. Apartments that will be occupied by couples or families will be given two (2) sets of the required keys.

Most keys that are given to residents are **restricted keys** that cannot be easily duplicated without the University's consent. This is done for the safety and security of the resident and the building. Residents needing additional keys should request them from the superintendent or their Director for Residential Services.

Maintenance During Occupancy

Generally, the superintendent will keep at least one apartment and room door key for each unit to be used for access during an emergency, to make necessary and authorized repairs, and for duplication in the event a key is lost. All stored keys are kept securely locked by the superintendent, generally in a locked key box, and cannot be accessed without the superintendent's authorization.

Once keys are given to a resident, he or she is responsible to keep them safe and secure. Any defects in an apartment door and/or building entrance door lock should be reported to the superintendent or Director for Residential Services. It is the University's responsibility to maintain, repair and/or replace these locks and keys should they become defective. The cost to repair any intentional damage by a resident or their guests to locks and/or keys may be charged back to the resident. Residents and their guests are urged to keep all building entrance and apartment doors securely locked at all times.

Lockouts and Lost or Stolen Keys

Lost keys should be reported to your building superintendent or Director for Residential Services immediately. A new key will be issued to residents in the case of lost keys reported during normal working hours. Depending on the circumstances of the loss, residents may be charged for the cost of the new key(s) and/or replacement of the lock(s), if required. Tenants who misplace their key(s) and arrive at their building after normal working hours may be charged a lockout fee. This fee is based on the University's cost of overtime to have the building superintendent respond to an after-hours lockout. In this circumstance, the resident will be asked to sign a lockout form acknowledging this charge. Residents should not pay this charge directly to building staff. The charge will be posted to the rent account.

The University may decide to replace locks at no charge to the tenant if a key is stolen as a result of a theft or robbery.

Vacancy and Turnover

Vacancy

Upon vacating an apartment, residents are required to return all keys that were issued to them to the superintendent or building staff. You should receive a **Key Receipt Form**

from the superintendent upon vacating the apartment. The surrender of keys is the confirmation of a resident's vacancy and the date that the apartment vacated. This is important to ensure that a security deposit is properly refunded. If all keys are not returned on the vacate date, residents risk the forfeiture of some of their security deposit.

Turnover

After vacancy, apartment door and room door cylinders are changed to ensure the safety and security of the next resident.

Responsibilities

Leasing Office – Distribution of Key Cards and Processing of Key Receipt forms upon vacancy.

On Site Superintendents – Preparation, Distribution, Securing and Maintaining Keys and Locks

Definitions

Key Card Form – Initial form given by University Apartment Housing to new residents. Authorizes residents to obtain new keys and move in to a unit and building.

Key Receipt Form – Vacancy form given to resident by a superintendent. Confirms receipt of required keys and move out date. Generates return of security deposit.

Lockout Charge Form – Form given to resident by a superintendent acknowledging an after-hours lockout and subsequent charge for same.

Contacts

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Directors for Residential Services

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Web Address for Policy

[Will be provided upon completion of policy library]

Lockout Fees

Tenants who misplace their key(s) and arrive at their building after normal working hours may be charged a lockout fee. This fee will range between \$ 30 and \$ 50 and is based on the University's cost of overtime to have the building superintendent respond to an after-hours lockout