

Controlling access to protect your assets

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If the start of the 21st century has taught the world anything it's to never take safety and security for granted. Threats once thought inconceivable now have to be considered even when whispered. Being able to control access to your facility and protect your organization's assets is now more important than ever.

Thanks in part to the additional focus on access control technologies, the last decade has seen several innovations in how facilities are designed and protected, with emphasis placed on structural integrity and logistical flow.

Not every healthcare institution is able to build a new structure as a means of improving access control and asset protection. Fortunately however, many healthcare organizations are able to implement additional measures and technologies to control and protect their environment.

Different needs, different solutions

Access control credential options typically rely on one or more of three basic concepts:

- Something you know (the PIN code for a keypad or a password)
- Something you have (a key, an access control card, or other electronic credential)
- Something you are (a biometric asset such as hand geometry or a fingerprint)

Selecting the right credential for each opening should be based on both risk and operational factors. Sometimes multiple credentials, or dual authentication, such as requiring both a card and PIN code can be implemented to raise the level of security at high-risk openings. Regardless of the nature of the assets you are protecting or the technology selected, you do have choices.

Patented key systems

Even the design and implementation of keys has made advancements in recent years. Through the use of a patented key system, facilities can better protect against authorized key duplication. What makes these systems effective is that key blanks can be acquired only from the system's manufacturer. This process typically requires validation and extensive documentation. And since the designs are patented, any attempt to duplicate the design without permission is subject to federal law. It is very unlikely that you will find these key blanks on online auction

sites. The result is your peace of mind that you know how many keys are out there and who is in possession of them.

Access control systems

Perhaps one of the most innovative advancements in controlling access has come from the of advanced access control systems, including both software and hardware. With the proper technologies in place and a few clicks on a computer by a trained administrator, what used to take a team of security personnel to manage now takes seconds and frees security teams up to be more proactive in other area of protection.

Access control systems give administrators the ability to control when and where individuals are allowed. Additionally, use of these technologies can provide a record of each access control transaction to aid in incident investigations and other reports. A well-designed system that includes electronic locks and credential readers can go a long way to ensure the safety and security of patients and staff, while also making the security team more efficient.

Electronic locks

Electronic locks today can give you the functionality of a traditional mechanical lock and a credential reader and / or keypad in one unit. This flexibility of multiple credential options and the scalability to have multiple networking options is the ideal solution for many access needs. Electronic locks are available in a number of different configurations, lock styles and reader types and can be stand-alone or networked with an access control system using traditional wires, or with advanced wireless communication options.

Smart cards

Smart cards are in many ways similar to proximity cards, but with enhanced security, functionality and storage potential. Smart cards, such as aptiQ™ which uses MiFare DESFire EV1 technology can be used with multiple systems such as logical access, time and attendance and cashless vending and have the latest, most advanced encryption protocols to keep information that is being transferred safe.

Biometric readers

Another level of access control that is being adopted in many organizations is the use of biometric readers. By scanning a user's fingerprint or iris, or reading hand geometry, biometric readers identify the user and then relay the information back to the access control software to check permissions and grant access.

With advanced design strategies, innovative hardware, and careful administration of personal access, facilities can better control the access its users have in and around the building as well as protect its assets. Allegion has the solutions and expertise to help you plan and implement the right solution for every area of your facility.

Learn more about protecting your assets

For more information about how controlling access will lead to a more secure facility, please contact a professional security consultant in your area by calling **888.758.9823** or fill out the **Contact Us** form on our website at allegion.com.

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