



THIS COULD HAPPEN TO YOU...

AN AVOIDABLE ACCIDENT:

An agency employee left a set of minivan keys un-attended. An individual living in the residence took the set of keys. Since there was a spare set, no one followed-up about the missing keys. Six weeks later, the individual took the van across a major intersection at 60 miles per hour and hit another vehicle. The occupants of both vehicles suffered severe and permanent injuries.

A TRAGIC LOSS:

A staff member forgot to secure the keys to the food supplies closet. An individual was then able to access the closet, and ingested frozen meat and baking soda. As a result result, the individual died 36 hours later.

BEST PRACTICES

- Designate at least one staff person to maintain an inventory of all keys and review it on a regular basis. Particular emphasis should be placed on keys for vehicles and medication cabinets.
- Replace the lock (and ignition switch if it is a vehicle key) if any key is missing and cannot be found, even if there is a spare key on hand.
- Keep keys in a locked key box and follow a sign in/ sign out system for keys that are not routinely kept by a specific staff member.
- Maintain a list that indicates who has access to what keys, and who is authorized to order replacements and duplicates.
- Implement a policy that treats keys as if they were medications.

continued on reverse...



PROTECT ALL KEYS

A good key system should protect access to:

- ✓ Vehicles
- ✓ Medications
- ✓ Cleaning products and other chemicals
- ✓ Food that may be dangerous if eaten in large quantities or without suitable preparation
- ✓ Consumers' money
- ✓ Facility's money, petty cash, etc.
- ✓ The facility itself

SECURING AGENCY KEYS

...BEST PRACTICES continued

- Maintain two sets of keys for every lock and label accordingly. One is a 'loaner set' and the other is a 'master set.'
- Never leave keys out, in a drawer, purse, or coat pocket.
- Turn off engine and remove keys when loading and unloading vehicles.
- Never leave keys in a vehicle unless the driver is sitting in the driver's seat.
- Lock cabinets that contain medication, cleaning chemicals, and other poisonous substances. Routinely check that cabinets are locked.
- Follow storage directions for all medications (e.g. some controlled substances are required to be under double lock.)
- Secure substances not usually considered dangerous, e.g. food, plastics, etc., if your facility serves individuals prone to perseveration on food or a diagnosis of pica.
- Train staff to be alert to unlocked cabinets, to correct oversights, and to give any keys found to a designated person.
- Secure money belonging to your organization or consumers in a safe. If the safe is small enough to be carried away, lock it in a closet or secure it to the floor.
- Have your Safety Committee give periodic reviews of best practices regarding key safety.
- Ensure employees treat the keys to their own vehicles with the same level of care as company vehicles.



Loss control is the daily responsibility of your staff. This bulletin is not to be considered a substitute for your own Loss Control Program. This bulletin does not include every possible loss potential, code violation or exception to good practice. We encourage you to copy this bulletin and share it with staff members.

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