

# Safety First

## Biometrics and other advances make security more efficient and cost-effective

By Erika Schnitzer, Managing Editor

Renters may be willing to pay a premium for certain safety features in their units and buildings, according to an Apartments.com survey conducted in October 2009, as part of its “What Renters Want” survey series.

According to the survey, 49 percent of respondents said they would pay more to have an in-unit security alarm system, 45 percent would pay for 24/7 building security patrol guards and a doorman, 42 percent would pay for security cameras on the property, and 29 percent would pay for cylinder deadbolt locks on windows and doors.

“We’ve done research that shows that residents will pay more for added security and convenience,” confirms Mel Gerst, solutions manager for residential security products at Ingersoll Rand Security Technologies. “When residents feel secure, and when it’s convenient for them to carry one credential to all parts of the building—that definitely adds to occupancy and resident retention rates.”

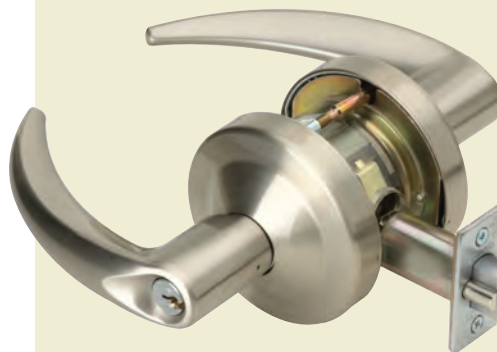
These days, more and more security access in multifamily communities is controlled by an electronic credential, which not only makes it easier for residents who don’t want to carry multiple keys with them at all times, but also cuts down on the time management spends on rekeying doors when residents move out—and puts units back on the market that much faster.

“Both key-control systems and electronic lock systems do provide NOI and staff time-savings,” asserts Eric Overhage, senior vice president at HandyTrac Systems. He estimates that his company’s system, for example, saves a 250-unit community 240 hours a year in maintenance hours. “How many more units can you lease with those hours?” he asks.

Such systems can also be used as a revenue producer, adds Dale Mathias, vice president of sales, Kaba Multihousing & Institutional, the parent company of Saflok. A resident who loses his electronic credential, for example, may be charged a replacement fee, though it won’t cost management as much to replace since rekeying the door is unnecessary. Operators may also choose to charge residents for an audit of their locks, another way to add to the ancillary income stream.

As Mathias points out, recodable electronic lock systems have an almost-immediate payback period, particularly in new construction. Additionally, he notes, some insurance carriers may provide discounts on properties that utilize electronic key control systems, as they minimize liability—particularly in the case of master keys (several properties have been found grossly negligent when managers lost their master keys). If a traditional master key were lost, for example, rekeying every unit in a community takes an immense amount of time; with an electronic system, recoding locks is much simpler—and faster.

Even non-electronic systems seem to have resolved this concern. Kwikset’s SmartKey, for example, allows managers to rekey locks without



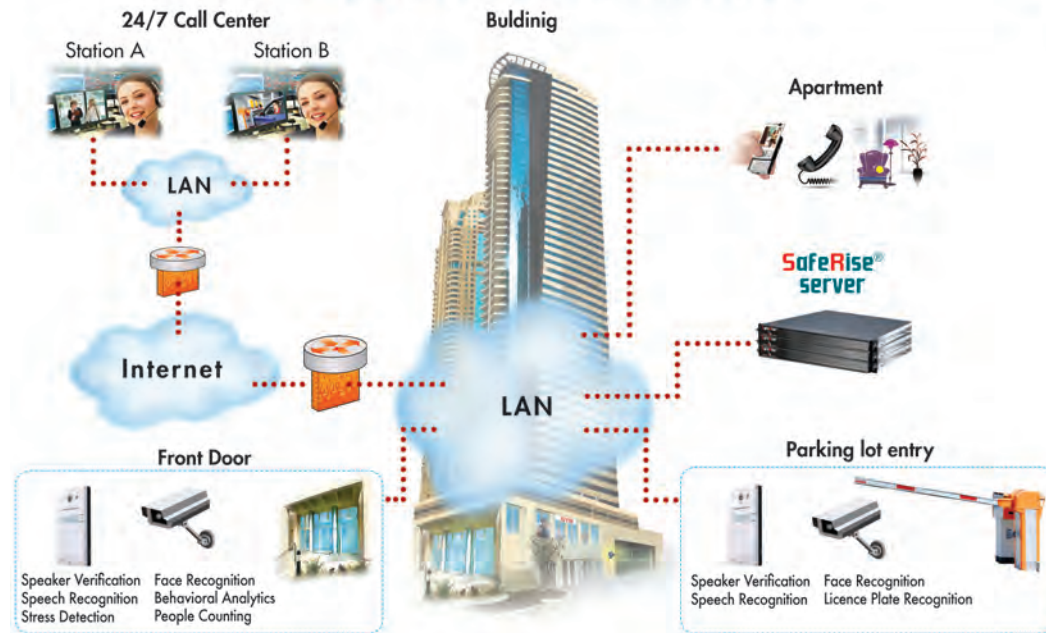
Ingersoll Rand Security Technologies’ Schlage ND-Series cylindrical lock is now compatible with Schlage Primus XP, Everest and Classic key systems, as well as competitor cores from Sargent, Corbin Russwin and Yale. The locks exceed ANSI/BHMA certified A156.2 – 2003, Series 4000, Grade 1 standards and are UL listed for a three-hour fire door. The locks are also available with electrified and/or Request to Exit options. A through-bolt mechanism provides positive interlock to the door, and independent heavy-duty spring cages provide effective lever support. Mounting screws are concealed ([www.schlage.com](http://www.schlage.com)).

Kwikset recently introduced the Key Control Deadbolt with its SmartKey re-key technology. SmartKey deadbolts and locks feature a side-locking bar technology, central to the lock’s ability to be rapidly and easily re-keyed. Additionally, the cylinder uses two steel balls inserted into the front of the key face to provide improved drill resistance. Kwikset Key Control Deadbolts contain two cylinders: one concealed, patented cylinder that is to be used by the property manager, allowing for one key control to all units, and a second cylinder to be used by the resident. With Key Control deadbolts, property managers can re-key every lock without removing it from the door. The Key Control cylinder is completely concealed from view, and it is a unique keyway, ensuring that no other key in the market will fit into the cylinder ([www.kwikset.com/keycontrol](http://www.kwikset.com/keycontrol)).



Kaba Multihousing & Institutional’s RezShield multi-housing access control system includes the new 79 contactless RFID electronic, which stores audit trails and use history. Residents use a modern credential, such as a fob, wristband, or keycard, to the contactless lock to gain access. The system features Web-based software, .NET-based technology, and browser access to the RezShield application. It can support properties ranging in size from 16 to 16,000 rooms. The 79 electronic lock is contactless (with MIFARE tags and read-write technology), sealed to withstand climate extremes and has multiple locking options—mortise, cylindrical latch, and exit device options ([www.kabamultihousing.com](http://www.kabamultihousing.com)).

## SafeRise® architecture



FST21's SafeRise is a building security access solution that facilitates management and control of building entry points, common areas, elevators and garages. It features second-generation biometrics, video and voice analytics to recognize authorized users. Once a resident is enrolled in the system, he will be recognized at all entry points with credential-free access simply by looking into a camera. Residents can also pre-register guests into the system, providing seamless entry into a building, and frequent visitors can be enrolled into the system and entered as pre-registered visitors with limitations of days and times ([www.fst21.com](http://www.fst21.com)).

having to remove them from the doors. "With normal locks, you'll have to rekey—that takes a lot of time and maintenance fees," points out Margo Fevergeon, product manager for Kwikset Signature series. The Kwikset series allows managers to rekey a lock in under 30 seconds.

Consequently, "master keys have started to fade away," notes Overhage, whose company's core system allows regional managers to view site activity remotely, as well as perform administrative functions, such as adding or removing employee authorization and creating an electronic trail of apartment access. By utilizing a remote system, managers are able to better maintain control of their properties.

In addition to liability concerns, recodable systems often allow for multiple codes to be programmed in at once, allowing management the ability to assign temporary maintenance codes, even giving time parameters around when the codes are valid in many cases. Saflok's system, for example, maintains an audit trail of its locks, providing management with access to a particular key's history. "You have 100 percent accountability at the door and the key station itself," Mathias points out.

### Future security trends

Advanced technology has taken security to a whole new level. Recently, Tel Aviv-based technology security company FST21 brought its building security access solution, SafeRise, to the United States. Featuring second-generation biometrics that utilizes facial and speech recognition—as well as license plate recognition—the technology secures multifamily communities without requiring residents to carry any credential for building access.

As Avi Lupo, general manager, SafeRise Americas, points out, the system eliminates the risk that residents will pass off their credentials to others who

should not have access. "It's a complicated market—this is something that would differentiate [a community] from the competition," he says, noting that a system that is responsive to anyone who approaches the building can also contribute to a prospective renter's initial impression of the community.

"Security in itself is a marketing plan," adds Seth Barcus, vice president sales & marketing, Best Monitoring Ltd. in New York, which represents the central station that sits behind the technology. "People want things monitored in real time. They don't want to find out that someone got in [unauthorized] yesterday."

Additional technological advances are also coming down the pike. New internet-accessible technology through secure programming will allow "for more than just the reliance on the site personnel to keep check and reduce liabilities," Overhage explains. Owners and managers will have the ability to perform administrative functions, such as providing employees access to particular units, from across the country.

Also new from HandyTrac are automatic notifications that allow managers to receive notice, at the end of the day, when all master keys are back in place. And smartphone integration will soon be available so that a property's key control systems can be monitored via a mobile device.

The ability to access doors with cell phones—a trend that some are already investigating—is also expected to become more popular, according to Mathias, who explains, "the basic principles of the hardware would take the place of the credential." This is a trend he has already seen in the military and in hospitality, and he expects to see it in multifamily in the near future.

In the long-term, Gerst believes, leveraging wireless technology would make it possible to recode locks without having to physically visit the door. MHN

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