The
Broadcasters' Desktop Resource
www.theBDR.net ... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

Checking it Out

SmartKey Padlocks Solve Key Security



By Kevin Raper

[September 2014] There are many reasons for changing locks at the studio or transmitter site. But with each iteration comes a hefty bill for the new lock and cutting a lot of keys. A fairly recent innovation solved part of the problem, but now it can deal more comprehensively with your key needs.

Over time, most of us seem to accumulate more and more keys.

The reason is that everything from the front door to the fence around the tower needs to be secure. Occasionally, locks get changed, and more keys are made. The result is that often one sign you are in the presence of a technical person is the large set of keys hanging at their side.

Some facilities use locks with changeable combinations. However, they are expensive, and not really suitable for every use, especially outdoors.

THE SMARTKEY

A few years ago, Kwikset introduced the SmartKey system. This allows the user to change out a lock's keys in less than a minute to a new set.

This year, Kwikset added the system to some of their padlocks.



The Kwikset Smartkey Padlock uses the same instant re-key technology that allows you to program the lock to use any Kwikset or other key that uses the KW1 key-way, such as LocWare, EZ-Set, Guardian, and many others.

Since you can re-key it in the field, it is easy and quick to change the locks any time there is a change in personnel or you need to give somebody temporary access.

KWIKSET IS KWIK

It is very simple to re-key the one of these locks.

All you do is:

1. Insert the current key.
2. Turn the cylinder 1/4 turn clockwise.
3. Insert the programming tool and remove it.



The old key is turned ¼ to the right and the SmartKey tool inserted

4. Remove the old key.
5. Carefully fully insert the new key you want to program to fit the lock and turn it back to the original position.
6. Turn the new key back 1/4 turn clockwise to make sure you cannot remove it.

That is all it takes to change the key.

WHENEVER/WHEREVER YOU NEED

In fact, you can re-program these locks as many times as needed, for just the cost of cutting the new keys, typically $1 or less each.

Now, here is the part that really caught my eye: when Kwikset added the padlocks to the SmartKey system, in addition to door knob locks and deadbolts, one can now program the transmitter building, the tower fence, and the dog house locks all to use the same key.

This way, you no longer have to carry a big wad of keys and look like a jailer. What a deal!

SECURE

I like the fact that the Kwikset Smartkey locks are all "Bump Key proof," as well as Pick, Bolt Cutter, and Pry resistant for maximum security at an unmanned site.

Probably the only real limitation with the SmartKey system is that you can only set the lock to one key profile at a time – it is not possible to use "Master" and "Sub-Master/Slave" key systems. Thus you cannot really have a single key that will open everything unless you want the front door key to open the GM's office or the DJ lounge key to work at the transmitter site. Aside from that, you still can, carefully, achieve a major reduction in your key count.

The SmartKey Padlocks have a Street Price of around $17 and change, and can be found at many Kwikset lock dealers and Home Improvement Centers. The locks also have a Lifetime Warranty, so you only need to buy them once.

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