

UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF ACCESS CONTROL

What Every Hotel Owner Needs to Know

By Ascension Associates



ABOUT ACCESS CONTROL



When deciding what access control solution would be the best fit for your hotel property, **the options may seem overwhelming**. The hospitality product landscape is remarkably different from residential smart locks, and with the growing guest preference for smart-tech powered experiences, it's crucial to understand your options.

Access control—including locks for common areas and guest rooms—is a **fundamental aspect of hotel security and guest experience**. As new technologies emerge each year, property owners often find themselves confused when trying to determine the best solution for their needs.

This guide breaks down modern and secure access control solutions into three main categories: **legacy key cards, keycodes/keypads, and mobile phone keys**. When selecting a system, it's essential to consider how both guests and staff will interact with it, as each property has unique requirements. While there's no "one size fits all" solution, understanding these three key architectures will help you make an informed decision for your property.



MUST-KNOW ACCESS CONTROL TECH

1 Legacy Key Card Locks - The Tried and True Method, but Are They Future Proof?

- **Secure and Familiar:** Guests are accustomed to swiping and scanning into rooms with a key card, making this an accessible choice.
- **Limitations:** These key cards require a front desk to manage check-ins and check-outs, and guests can accidentally reset magnetic strip cards by bringing them close to magnets.
- **Upgrade Potential:** Near Field Communication (NFC) cards are becoming more popular, leveraging the same technology as tap-to-pay on mobile phones. Guests can use their room key as a payment method, combining integrated payment terminals to introduce more upselling opportunities across the property.



2 Key Code Locks - Modern Convenience for Stress-Free Management



- **Popularized by Short-Term Rentals:** Anyone that has stayed at an Airbnb can attest to the ease of using a 4 or 6 digit code to unlock their unit. The upside for property operators is guest access can be managed remotely, allowing front desks to focus on making sure guests have a great experience.
- **Automate Early Access:** Housekeeping codes can automatically alert you property management system when a room is ready, optimizing guest check-in times while also allowing for automated early check-in and late check-out upsells.
- **Enhanced Building Security:** Codes can be synced across the property, allowing a guest to unlock the main entrance, fitness center, outdoor terraces, and any other common doors with their private room code.

MUST-KNOW ACCESS CONTROL TECH

3 **Mobile Key Locks** - A Sustainable Long-term Solution for Your Property?

- **Tech-forward Thinking:** Mobile phone ownership is revolutionizing security with mobile car keys, tap-to-pay, and two-factor authentication- it's no secret many people are getting rapidly accustomed to using their phone as a security and authentication hub.
- **Available with Many RFID Card Locks:** The same key card upgrades to add NFC also enable mobile keys to be used, meaning you can enable guests to choose whether they want a contactless check-in experience, or still receive a key card upon arrival.
- **Brand Apps:** Don't want to use your lock manufacturer's app or Apple Wallet to hold keys? Many chains are releasing branded apps, allowing guests to book restaurant reservations, schedule spa appointments, and see the local attractions in the same place as their room key!



SECRETS TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Now that you understand the different types of access control for your property, how are these systems integrated? At Ascension Associates, our years of experience installing smart locks have **revealed some secrets with getting smart locks up and running quickly:**

1. **The biggest surprise for our clients is how long locks take to be manufactured:** professional locksets can take 2-3 months to arrive, as custom parts are often necessary. However, plenty of finishes, designs, and handles are available to ensure whatever lock you pick will complement the branding of your hotel.
2. Lock installation is only half the equation, as each lock must be integrated with your property's WiFi or hub system. **This can include complex setup of hardware, software, staff training, and monitoring and support vendors** typically outside the domain and scope of locksmiths.
3. Syncing your new smart locks with the existing PMS and guest messaging systems **requires extensive testing**, making sure the system is durable for any edge cases that may occur with guests.
4. Staff onboarding must be customized for your specific property's tech stack **to ensure they are getting the vital information** to run your property efficiently without being overwhelmed with the new capabilities available.

The good news? You don't have to navigate this complex process alone. Your time and energy are resources best spent on creating exceptional guest experiences. Our team at Ascension Associates can turn what could be a daunting task into a seamless transition.

CONTACT US



With our experience, Ascension Associates can manage each step of the lock installation and onboarding process, **giving you peace of mind to focus on what you do best.** By partnering with us, you're not just installing new smart locks - you're elevating your entire guest experience.

We have spent years installing and integrating a variety of different access control hardware and software in countless hotels, while training staff who can leverage the system to its full potential. We carefully plan out the transition to ensure **minimal disruption** to both guests and your day-to-day operations.

Whether you're still exploring options or you've decided on the perfect access control solution, we're ready to help:

- **Unsure about the best solution?** We'd love to learn more about your unique needs, and help you determine if an upgrade is right for your property.
- **Know what you need?** Our team is prepared to bring your vision to life! Let's get started in elevating the guest experience at your property.

Schedule your free consultation today