

New Frontiers in Multifamily Access Control

Commercial v. Residential: Identifying the
Right Solution for Your Multifamily Property



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Today, more than a quarter of all renters use smart locks or keyless entry systems.

The draw of mobile access technologies and solutions in the multifamily space is not particularly new. The convenience and near-ubiquity of mobile access and digital keys in hospitality, higher education and a range of professional environments have helped popularize what was formerly a niche concept and made the benefits of access control tech evident to a sizable majority of consumers.

In the last few years, however, the popularity of mobile access solutions has soared to new heights. Automated access control systems made inroads in multifamily environments because of pandemic pressures that prompted residents, owners and operators to look for and embrace amenities that minimize shared surface contact and limit the need for close physical contact. Today, more than a quarter of all renters use smart locks or keyless entry systems.¹

For residents, mobile access control is about convenience and utility. For multifamily owners and operators, it's about a cost-effective way to boost security, have more flexibility and control over access and increase their facilities' appeal to current and prospective residents.

¹ www.rent.com/research/smart-home-technology-for-renters-survey



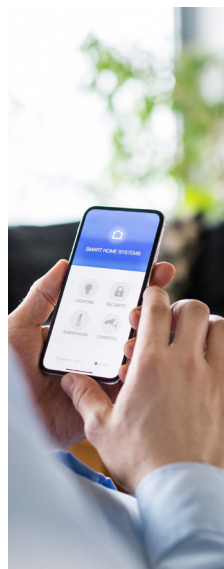
Smart home industry automation in U.S. homes will reach nearly 54% market penetration this year.¹



57% of renters are willing to pay more for access to smart devices.²



82% of renters want at least one smart device in their homes.³



45% of renters want smart thermostats, and 40% want smart locks.⁴

¹ www.askwonder.com/research/us-connected-home-market-4qifpd55k

² www.multifamilyexecutive.com/property-management/apartment-trends/most-renters-would-agree-to-rent-increase-for-smart-home-features_o

³ www.rent.com/research/smart-home-technology-for-renters-survey

⁴ www.rent.com/research/smart-home-technology-for-renters-survey



Driving Demand

An expanding ecosystem of access control systems and solutions offers various options that meet increased consumer demand and greater owner/operator comfort and familiarity with access control technologies. From straightforward to sophisticated, the possibilities are endless and the conclusion is inescapable: mobile access solutions make multifamily living safer and more manageable.

With more options for owners and operators come more questions from consumers: questions about cost, features and the practical utility and day-to-day management of access control solutions, including service and maintenance.

It is incumbent upon multifamily owners and operators to be able to answer those questions to their satisfaction. They need to understand and articulate the many benefits of access control systems to their current and future residents. From architects and developers to owners, investors and facility managers, anyone considering investing in or working with a commercial access control solution should familiarize themselves with the evolving landscape of access control technologies and solutions available.

How do you know which access control technology is right for you, and what systems and solutions have the features and functionality to make your multifamily asset a more secure and sophisticated residence?



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Navigating Options

At a time when almost everything is a short trip to the local home improvement store or a few clicks from ordering an affordable off-the-shelf smart-lock or keyless entry system away, what differentiates commercial-grade systems from generic consumer options? While off-the-shelf tech may come at a cheaper initial price point, they typically lack the robust functionality, valuable flexibility and necessary scalability most commercial solutions provide.

The best of those solutions provide the following benefits:



Powerful security

Now, more than ever, sophisticated security measures are a non-negotiable feature for multifamily residents. According to the Department of Justice, there are more than one million burglaries in the United States annually. An eye-opening figure from the Bureau of Justice reveals that 34% of burglars use the front door when breaking into a home. But residential security isn't just about preventing crime; it's about protecting residents and assets by limiting access to sensitive or restricted areas of the building, calibrating access control permissions to different individuals or different times of day and ensuring facility access is limited to residents and approved guests. Removing the possibility of shared keys, cards or fobs closes a common security loophole.



Customization, connectivity and flexibility

The customizable flexibility of high-quality commercial-grade access control systems affords previously unthinkable levels of granular control over who can access the building and its specific areas at different times and with user-specific designations. Owners and operators can program (and easily modify) different access controls for meeting rooms and common areas, building entrances and elevators, parking facilities and anywhere else where access should be monitored or limited to residents. Some access control systems even enable tracking access and gathering critical data.



Unparalleled convenience and ease of use

For residents, quality commercial-grade access control solutions are a seamless and convenient way to combine security and ease of access. The best systems allow users to open doors and access defined areas securely and efficiently with a keycard or from their mobile device, all without carrying a physical key. Leading mobile access solutions allow property managers to quickly issue and revoke credentials remotely, direct to the mobile device, simplifying changeover during move-in and move-out. These solutions also eliminate the need for residents to carry multiple keys, another costly and inconvenient necessity for conventional locks—as well as a point of security vulnerability—and does away with concerns over lost keys and the disruption and expense of accidental lockouts.



Aesthetics and accessibility

The unlimited range of access control systems options available to owners and operators means they have choices regarding functionality, features, aesthetics and styling. Leaders in this space offer various hardware options, ranging from sleek and stylish digital elements to classically inspired knobs, handles and latches. Residents can use key cards and key fobs in addition to wristbands and mobile apps, making it possible to customize a system to meet both owners' and residents' preferences and priorities.



Appeal to current and prospective residents

Smart tech in multifamily spaces is not new. What is new is the degree renters and residents expect and demand smart technology extras like televisions and entertainment options, thermostat controls and voice-activated functionality. Rising consumer demand has made technology amenities almost as visible as standard physical amenities like fitness centers and concierge service counters. Consequently, mobile access technologies represent new marketing tools and competitive differentiators that help properties keep pace.



Cost-effective solutions

The digital connectivity of the best access control technologies means owners and operators no longer have to change or recut physical keys, saving time and resources for new tenants. Some systems allow users to control multiple properties via one cloud-based platform, eliminating on-site personnel that traditionally provide or renew physical keys for tenants and visitors. Another potential revenue-enhancing benefit of some access control platforms is the practical incentive for residents to download a proprietary mobile app. The connectivity and visibility of that app provides valuable opportunities to promote other owners, operators, or property services and promotions.



Solutions Built For Success

There are countless options available to owners and operators considering a commercial-grade access control solution for their multifamily assets, from the look of the locks to the tech specs and access options.

But what distinguishes the best access control solutions is not the hardware but the software. Not the click of a lock or the push of a button, but the next-level connectivity and control that those solutions provide. These benefits are unavailable via off-the-shelf access control and local electronic solutions.



Fully connected systems and software

Leading providers of access control solutions have created proprietary platforms that unlock an extraordinary new level of functionality and control. Locks that communicate with a central server via online radio frequency (RF) eliminate the need to manually encode keycards, cancel cards and check battery life. Reliable and secure wireless platforms provide increased reliability and performance at an affordable cost, addressing the unique needs of low-power monitoring and access-control network applications. A wireless network enables smooth interface and integration opportunities with other online devices and systems commonly found in multifamily environments.



Features and functionality

These systems' features and functionality encompass lock audit trails, jammed alarms, open door alerts, cancel access card functionality, move-out management features and low battery warnings. Specific benefits for owners and operators include real-time communications and reports, remote door controls, exit and entry monitoring and locking abilities and even the capacity to use location solutions in a way that powers a loyalty program or other related features.



Cloud-based benefits

Cloud-based access control systems deliver open, secure 24/7 connectivity that seamlessly interfaces with other property systems. Cloud monitoring and management tools offer 24/7 availability, automated upgrades and secure backups, ensuring a property is always protected against the latest security threats.



Groundbreaking location solutions

A wireless infrastructure uses the Internet of Things (IoT) and Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology to provide integrated real-time and proximity indoor location services. Sensor beacons and gateways throughout the property can utilize BLE to connect tenant and employee smartphones and share data on tenant preferences and location from the cloud. Property owners and operators can leverage that data to enhance the tenant experience, safeguard assets and streamline operations.



Value: Added

The appeal of added security and convenience through seamless and flexible keyless access options is evident for residents. But for owners, operators and on-site facility management personnel, these holistic systems and solutions offer an incredible array of game-changing benefits:

- Multifamily owners and operators can enjoy reporting and transparency, data protection and compliance, and access to secure cloud storage and backups without on-site servers or systems. They also benefit from automated updates, 24/7 availability, unlimited scalability and built-in redundancy.
- Property managers will be drawn to easy installation, smooth and seamless operation with an intuitive user interface, a cost-efficient model, remote monitoring functionality, scalable IT resources, audit trails and traceability and robust cloud security against data theft, leakage and deletion.
- Maintenance professionals will be pleased to learn that there is no need for local system maintenance. With these systems, they now benefit from unparalleled asset management control, easy troubleshooting and replacement options, notifications and alarms and the confidence of working with an always up-to-date, secured and monitored system.



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Questions and Considerations

Why not a consumer lock?

There are stark differences between an off-the-shelf smart lock and a true commercial-grade access control solution with wireless connectivity, systems integration, remote monitoring and reporting and centralized control options. While every property is different, and a commercial-grade access control solution might not be the right fit for every owner and every circumstance, the value proposition, control, flexibility and overall level of features and functionality is dramatically elevated.

Should I be concerned about privacy or data security?

Some residents, property managers and owners may express privacy concerns regarding mobile access technologies, specifically that digital key data may present a risk of providing unauthorized users with room access. Multifamily professionals should address this risk by working with providers and solutions that offer advanced encryption capabilities for the delivery, storage and use of digital keys.

What about cost and ROI?

The investment required to install and maintain a commercial-grade access control system varies considerably depending on the nature of the underlying technology, the implementation scale, and the system's features. While every owner and operator should discuss price and ROI with their access control technology partner or trusted provider, commercial-grade systems' efficiencies and added value typically make the cost-benefit analysis a no-brainer.

Will residents embrace such a system?

Resident comfort with access control technology is another sticking point for some concerned owners. While some residents will inevitably be unaccustomed to or unsure about using digital keys—particularly older demographics who are likely less tech-savvy—the best systems are intuitive and easy to use by design. Clear communication from property staff specifically equipped to address any questions that residents may have fully can also help overcome any discomfort or uncertainty. Ultimately, most tenants will be thrilled to utilize these systems and outnumber any initial hesitation or slower adopters.

What if I have questions about deployment, maintenance and systems integration?

Owners and property management professionals should not be afraid to ask tough questions about prospective systems' current and future compatibility. They should prioritize solutions that can readily incorporate new functionalities without resulting in high hardware replacement costs. And they should ask their access control technology solutions provider questions like:

- What systems does this mobile access platform require to integrate and function?
- Can this mobile access service be incorporated into an existing resident-facing mobile app, or can it be a stand-alone solution?
- What are the maintenance requirements for the system in question? Does it include battery and functionality status reporting to facilitate maintenance and battery management?



Partnership and Possibilities

For a long time, increasing security or access control often required compromises in cost or convenience. Today, the best access control solutions enhance resident convenience and deliver powerful and flexible new functionality and control for owners and operators—all while introducing cost-saving new efficiencies. The result is a clear win-win scenario for multifamily owners and residents.

However, developers, builders or property managers should contact their security partner/provider for guidance before investing in and installing any access control solution. Investing in a commercial-grade access control system offered by a trusted solutions provider with deep experience is the most critical decision any multifamily owner or operator can make.

Powered by award-winning software and systems that deliver top-tier functionality, Vingcard is the market's leading provider in mechanical and electromechanical locking, access control, identification technology, entrance automation, security doors and a wide range of security and mobile access systems.

Vingcard' catalog of cutting-edge, commercial-grade access control solutions also includes hardware, software, support services and technical infrastructure: everything multifamily owners and operators need to make their properties safer, more secure and more connected.

To learn more about our technologies and access control solutions, visit
BuildToRent.vingcard.com

The ASSA ABLOY Group is the global leader in access solutions. Every day we help people feel safe, secure and experience a more open world.

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