

A close-up photograph of a person's hand inserting a coin into a vending machine. The machine has a keypad with numbers 1-9, 0, and an 'E' button. Above the keypad is a small blue screen. The background is blurred, showing other vending machines in a row.

SECURING VENDING SYSTEMS

Protecting remote vending assets, routes, and systems.



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Hotels, universities, airports, shopping centers, parks; vending machines can be found on almost any corner. The convenience of vending machines continues to amaze. Now packed with more than just snacks, everyday necessities, electronics, even hair and makeup products are just a few button presses away. Without a proper locking system, however, vending machines are susceptible to attacks. And while flashy electronics may draw more customers to a vending machine, they also make an attractive target for thieves.

Mechanical Lock & Keys

Mechanical locks and keys are generally the first line of defense when it comes to securing vending machines. With seemingly limitless variety, simple installation, and appealing prices, mechanical locks and keys are an entry-level solution for general security. Although largely effective, mechanical locks and keys can present serious risks for vending companies. With loss of inventory and revenue at risk, they may not be the best option. Notably, mechanical locks and keys lack the ability to track who was where, and when. Additionally, the risks associated with a lost, stolen, or copied key are innumerable. With no way to trace when a key is copied, facilities can easily lose control of the number of keys in circulation and, inevitably, their physical security altogether. Re-keying an entire fleet of machines can be cost-prohibitive. In addition to critical issues with key control, mechanical locks are susceptible to picking and keyway vandalism, rendering them inoperable. Simply put, mechanical locks and keys are not secure enough to meet the evolving demands of the vending industry.

Challenges in Vending

With employee routes regularly including over 100 vending machines, it is important that employees and managers can track where their keys are and, especially, which keys they are carrying. If someone has the wrong keys they either have to skip serving the machine, or have someone else drive over to help, taking time away



THE CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION OF VENDING MACHINES UNFORTUNATELY MAKES THEM A HIGHER TARGET FOR THIEVES LOOKING FOR CASH AND PRODUCTS. WITHOUT A PROPER LOCKING SYSTEM VENDING MACHINES ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ATTACKS.

from scheduled maintenance. When someone skips a machine or route due to lost or misplaced keys, work piles up, causing further schedule delays. Both large and small scale vending operations struggle to keep track of employee whereabouts. Additionally, tracking copies of keys can be problematic, particularly when it comes to disgruntled and former employees. Without the ability to track who is accessing which machines, vending operators struggle to identify the source of missing money or product.



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New payment options have become available on vending machines, making them even more convenient. Unfortunately, this convenience often includes a higher risk of attacks. Hackers are no longer interested only in what's physically inside the machine, but also the information it holds. Many companies have suffered hacks into their card systems, exposing personal customer information, from names to card numbers. With most vending machines being equipped with mechanical vending locks, it is an easy task for a novice lock picker to gain access to the inside of a machine. On average, it takes two minutes for someone to pick a standard vending lock with the right equipment. And a few more minutes to download and steal customer information.

Key-Centric Access Control

Although less prevalent than mechanical locks and keys, and even electronic security systems, key-centric access control systems combine the precision of electronic systems with the simple installation, affordability, and ease of use of a mechanical system. One such solution is the CyberLock® system. CyberLock access control systems provide full featured access control to every locking point, whether inside or outdoors. CyberLock cylinders are virtually tailor made for the vending industry. CyberLock offers high security electronic cylinders that are designed to retrofit into existing hardware. The unique design negates standard lock picking techniques and the combination of the CyberLock cylinder and CyberKey smart key ensures a record of every access attempt is recorded in both the lock and the key, keeping employees accountable. Additionally, the cylinders are installed without power or wiring, making setup and installation quick, easy, and affordable. Instead, the batteries in the CyberKey smart keys energize the CyberLock cylinders, which means there is no need to manage and replace batteries in the field. Keys are programmed with access permissions for each individual user. If a key is lost or stolen, it can easily be deactivated in the system, eliminating the need to re-key.



THE UNIQUE DESIGN [OF CYBERLOCK] NEGATES STANDARD LOCK PICKING TECHNIQUES AND ENSURES A RECORD OF EVERY ACCESS ATTEMPT IS RECORDED IN BOTH THE LOCK AND THE KEY, KEEPING EMPLOYEES ACCOUNTABLE.

Conclusion:

With the continued growth of vending machines, it is imperative that companies choose a higher security option than mechanical locks. Many vending companies have made the switch to CyberLock and have seen significant improvements to the security of their systems. CyberLock also enhances the practicality for employees and administrators. With CyberLock, employees only have to carry one key that has all of their access permissions and helps keep track of which machines have been serviced. With audit capabilities and precise key control forming the foundation of its system, CyberLock electronic cores and CyberKey smart keys are an excellent security solution for the vending industry. ☺