

# Key Information on Keys



By GMC(SW) William Fisher, USN (Ret.)

**S**ome of the most important items, other than explosives, that ordnance people work with are keys to magazines, ready-service lockers, and small-arms lockers. During the safety surveys I did while serving at the Naval Safety Center, I found that some of the basic guidelines concerning keys have been ignored, forgotten or circumvented.

OPNAVINST 5530.13B, *Department of the Navy Physical Security Instruction for Conventional Arms, Ammunition and Explosives (AA&E)*, Chapter 0307, spells out specific guidelines for keys.

Here are some of the highlights from that chapter that I've seen as problems.

- 🔑 Appoint a custodian of keys and locks in writing.
- 🔑 Don't leave keys unsecured or unattended. Make sure only authorized personnel have them or that the keys are in a container that is as secure as the materials the keys give access to.
- 🔑 Keep keys to AA&E and systems that detect intrusion separate from other keys. Keep a roster of people who have those keys out of public view.
- 🔑 Do not make a master key to locks for AA&E spaces.
- 🔑 When keys are lost, misplaced or stolen, replace the affected locks or lock cores. Keep replacement locks and cores in a secure area.

🔑 Inventory locks and keys semi-annually, and keep records for a year.

🔑 Maintain a key-control register to ensure continuous accountability of keys. Keep the register for at least 18 months after the last entry.

🔑 The only time you can remove keys to armories, racks, containers, or magazines from an installation or ship is to keep them in protected storage elsewhere.

🔑 For afloat commands, you must keep keys to ammunition and explosives spaces on welded or brazed rings separate from rings with keys to weapons-storage spaces. The purpose is to prevent theft or loss of one key ring that could give access to both weapons and ammunition. Ready-for-issue, AA&E lockers for response forces are exempt from this requirement.

🔑 When people, such as duty officers, are responsible for safeguarding or otherwise having keys immediately available, they may sign for a sealed container of keys when the unbroken seal is evidence that the keys have not been disturbed. In afloat commands, they may sign for key rings as long as the weld has not been broken. However, they must verify the number of keys on the ring. ❌

GMC(SW) Fisher retired from active duty last summer.