



Master Locksmiths
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALASIA

Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK)

Frequently asked questions



What is the Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) Scheme?

The MLAK is a new and innovative scheme that uses a universal lock and key to allow people with disabilities 24 hours a day access to public facilities, e.g. accessible toilets.

Why should we install the Scheme?

Accessible facilities should be open during the day, but it is sometimes necessary to lock them after hours.

The MLAK is designed to increase access to these facilities. The MLAK will reduce vandalism, keep facilities clean and at the same time overcome the obstacle of accessible toilets being locked. Easy access to toilets after hours is something that the general public often takes for granted.

For people with a disability the issue is never that straightforward. Many people with a physical disability in particular find it difficult to locate an accessible public toilet that is open after hours. The Scheme is therefore extremely important to enable people with a disability to go out in the evening.

How successful is the Scheme?

After a trial period with Pittwater Council in 1994–95 there are now over 230 facilities fitted with MLAK. In Britain, where a similar scheme exists, there are over 4000 accessible facilities fitted with a universal lock.

Where can the lock be used?

MLAK has been fitted to elevators at railway stations, accessible toilets in Council and National Park facilities, and adaptive playground equipment. Please remember to leave the facility open during business hours if possible.

What do Councils or the owner of the facility need to do to participate in the Scheme?

1. Contact their nearest Master Locksmith (MLAA member) to confirm that he or she is participating in the Scheme (visit www.masterlocksmiths.com.au to find your nearest MLAA member).
2. Engage the locksmith to install the lock and provide a privacy latch to prevent someone entering from outside when a toilet is in use.
3. Display signage is available from the Master Locksmiths Association and/or locksmith (sticker) and we encourage Council's installing the locks to develop signage based on MLAA recommendations (see attached).
4. Make MLAK keys available for loan in your local area, for overseas visitors and others who don't have their own key.
5. Inform SCIA on 02 9661 8855; 1800 819 775 that the lock has been installed. SCIA will place the location of the lock on a database. An updated list will be distributed regularly, and on request, to inform people where the locks are located across Australia. It is also available as a download, please visit www.scia.org.au

How much does it cost to purchase/install a MLAK lock?

For a lock already fitted to a door the barrel can be exchanged cheaply. The cost of a new lock depends on the type of lock fitted.

Can a Council or building owner be legally sued if a person with a disability is hurt making use of its facility fitted with a MLAK lock after hours?

Legal advice suggests that the MLAK system neither adds to nor detracts from an owner's responsibilities. Owners are obliged to maintain all their facilities in a safe condition. Facilities are locked after hours to reduce vandalism and hence maintain that safe condition. MLAK gives owners the opportunity to reduce vandalism but still provide access to facilities for people with disabilities.

People with a disability can purchase their own universal key from their local Master Locksmith (MLAA member) for approximately \$10-\$20.

How does the public obtain MLAK keys?

Availability is restricted to people who have a mobility difficulty OR who have written authority from:

- a doctor
- a disability organisation
- centre management or owner of a building with an accessible toilet on site.

For further information, please contact the Master Locksmiths Association (03) 9645 9995 or Spinal Cord Injuries Australia on (02) 9661 8855 or 1800 819 775



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Code of Practice



1. Supply MLAK keys only to people who have a mobility difficulty OR who have written authority from:
 - a doctor
 - a disability organisation
 - the centre management or owner of a building with an accessible facility on site
2. Only lock accessible facilities if absolutely necessary. If the toilet must be locked, fit only the MLAK lock.
3. If the facility is accessed via another door or gate, ensure that it provides at least an 850 mm clear opening.
4. Place locks and other door furniture between 900–1100 mm from the floor.
5. Provide a privacy latch to prevent others entering while the facility is in use.
6. Publicise the location of accessible facilities in your area, together with the fact that they are fitted with MLAK locks.
7. Make the MLAK keys available for loan in your local area, for overseas and other visitors.
8. For those who do not have their own key, place information on how to obtain a key on the outside of the facility block/door. The sign should be clearly legible and contain information on how a person can obtain a key. See example attached.
9. Advise SCIA on (02) 9661 8855, 1800 819 775 or information@scia.org.au of the location of new MLAK locations for addition to the MLAK directory.

For information about where to obtain keys or locks within your area, contact the Master Locksmiths Association of Australasia (phone 1800 810 698 or visit www.masterlocksmiths.com.au).

For general enquires or information about the locations of facilities fitted with the MLAK system, contact Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (1800 819 775 or visit www.scia.org.au).