

SMART DIGITAL KEYS

Managing Access to Single-Family Residences in the New Normal

The coronavirus pandemic has forced property owners and managers to face a new reality — one where contact is limited. Keeping residents, third-party vendors, and staff members safe will be of the utmost importance in the coming months and beyond.

While some single-family operators are beginning to adopt connected locks, many still rely on lockboxes to grant access to unoccupied properties. Aside from being less than ideal from a safety and reliability standpoint, lockboxes are temporary. The lockbox goes away once someone moves into a property, which means there's no way to perform services unless the resident is present.

At a time when safety and security are paramount, a connected lock with a modern curb-to-couch solution — using a smart digital key to get someone wherever they need to be in a property or community, whenever they need to be there — is a holistic approach to smart access. It provides increased safety and convenience to residents while offering the opportunity for SFR operators to improve their work order efficiency and differentiate from competitors.



Making Curb-to-Couch a Reality

First, let's define what a smart key is. Some may assume it's simply a digital representation of a physical key, but it's more than that. Sure, smart keys remove the safety risks evident in mechanical keys (e.g., they're easy to copy and lose). Smart keys also provide the ability to revoke access instantly, similar to a connected lock or keycard system but without requiring human interaction.

However, smart keys do more than this — they stay associated with a user and can update what that user is allowed to do across different types of access points in real time. To enforce social distancing and safety, a smart key that lets residents into a community center can now update to only allow a limited number of users inside at a time.

"Smart keys remove the safety risks evident in mechanical keys."

The curb-to-couch approach comes together when a smart key is used as part of a smart property platform that's integrated not only with multiple types of access points — residence front doors, community area doors, and gate intercoms — but also with property management software, work order software, and systems like cameras. This level of integration across different systems and hardware allows any authorized user of a smart key to get where they need to be with the least amount of friction as possible, while simultaneously adding safeguards and security.



It is important to note that a smart key system relies on a connected lock, which is a lock that has a connection to the internet directly over Wi-Fi or via Z-wave or Zigbee to a connected hub. Algorithmic-based locks or Bluetooth locks lack the independent connectivity that allows for real-time control and audit history without relying on a phone as a conduit, which means they cannot be part of true smart key systems. Luckily, there are plenty of connected locks for every application imaginable available from established hardware manufacturers.

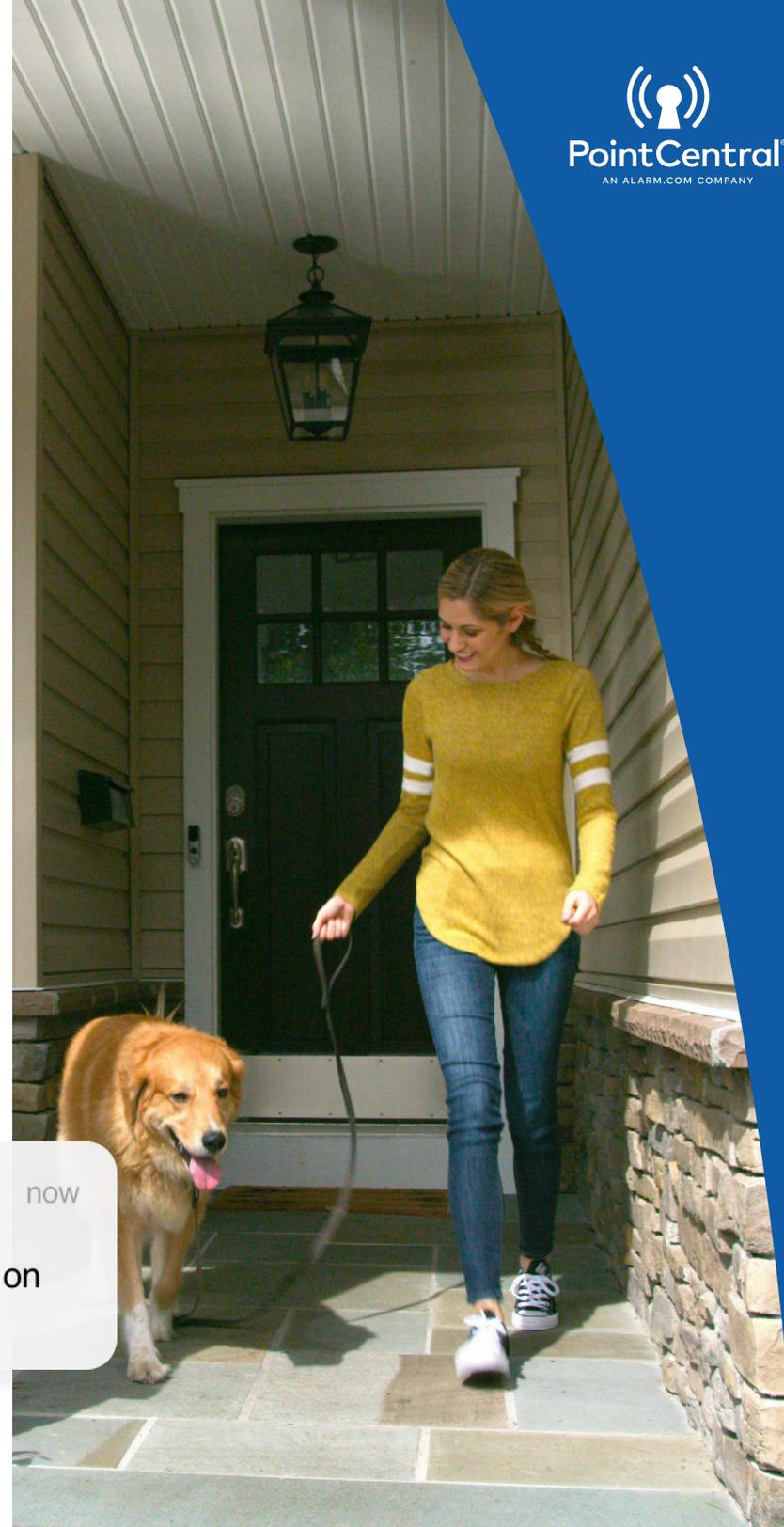
“The curb-to-couch approach comes together when a smart key is used as part of a smart property integrated platform.”

To realize the benefits of smart home investments, single-family rental operators should consider the following digital key applications in their NOI calculations:

 POINTCENTRAL

now

My Home: Front Door was opened at 2:41 pm on Thursday, May 4.



1. Work Orders

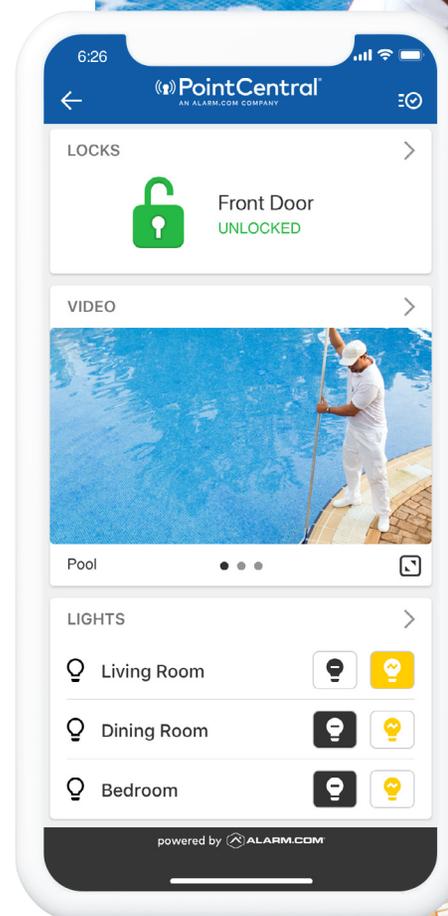
One of the biggest struggles right now is filling tenants' work orders conveniently, efficiently, and safely. Residents — and staff members — are wary about exposing themselves to potential illnesses by letting people into their homes.

“One way that digital keys lower risk is by allowing you to schedule work orders when residents aren't home.”

In this new normal, property owners and managers will have to be vigilant before completing permission-to-enter work orders. You'll have to get information on how many people are in the space and whether any of them are currently sick or could have been exposed to the virus (via travel, hospital, etc.).

On top of these processes, one way that digital keys lower risk is by allowing you to schedule work orders when residents aren't home. Once a work order is assigned to staff members or vendors, their digital key would simply update to let them have “Permission to Enter” (PTE) status to enter the home while the resident is away, complete the work, disinfect the space, and leave. This not only makes it more efficient for the worker and resident because schedules don't have to align, but it also reduces the risk of interacting with another person.

As an added benefit, cameras tied to a single smart property platform can also capture videos and photos of staff members or vendors as they approach and leave residences. Best of all, each worker's digital key updates automatically to ensure he or she can't enter the house again, which is a safety reassurance renters can't get from traditional keys.



2. Property Showings

No matter what's going on in the world, people will always need to look at new properties and move residences. How do property owners and managers facilitate this in a post-coronavirus world? There are a few ways to use smart key technology with unattended showings.

In a fully automated setting, potential tenants don't have to meet — or interact at all — with leasing agents. Instead, they schedule a tour on a property showing website, get a digital key, and access the property on their own. The showing staff gets a notification when the prospective resident arrives, and the prospect receives an optional survey. This method saves prospects time and property owners money.

In a less automated process, prospective residents have contact with leasing agents via phone or video calls. The leasing agent then manually generates showing codes and can choose whether they want to meet the prospect at the home. This saves time because it still doesn't require the leasing agent to be at the showing, but it also provides a human element to the process.

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If a home is inside an HOA or community that has an intercom, a curb-to-couch solution can help make things more convenient. For example, a single smart key can get prospective residents through an intercom and into a housing unit or community center without having to download multiple apps or memorize several codes. Exterior cameras at the house also help by recognizing prospective residents as they approach the home or telling landlords when someone is there who shouldn't be.



3. Deliveries

Even before the pandemic, food, grocery, and other supply deliveries were becoming increasingly popular — and increasingly a nuisance, as residents have to figure out how to be at home for important deliveries. In our new reality, property owners and managers must come up with solutions where deliveries can happen without the need for contact between delivery workers and residents.

The aforementioned couch-to-curb solutions can help with this. Residents can create temporary or recurring digital keys that allow their favorite restaurants or grocery stores to deliver food to their doorsteps or into their garages, keeping the items safe while respecting social distancing. In the event of a last-minute delivery, residents can use their smartphones to unlock their front doors remotely (or their garages or back doors) and eliminate the need to go to the door to get a delivery.

“Residents can create temporary or recurring digital keys that allow their favorite restaurants or grocery stores to deliver food to their doorsteps”

Digital keys also allow delivery staff to make deliveries at community centers for family gatherings, and there is a full event log to show who used which code at any entrance, any time. Combined with driveway cameras and video doorbells, residents can see when packages are being dropped off and instruct delivery workers on where to leave them.

These technologies take the worry out of ordering deliveries, and they give residents a sense of safety by offering them control over the situation.



POINTCENTRAL

The Ultimate Curb-to-Couch Solution

PointCentral's innovative and fully integrated [curb-to-couch](#) solution provides a simplified experience for you and your residents. The platform is flexible, reliable, and secure.

To learn how your single-family residences can benefit from our technology, [contact PointCentral](#) for a free demo.

