



# Making the move to electronic access

How to ensure your project is a  
success from start to finish

| Multifamily edition

# Why electronic access? Why now?

Residents are more tech-savvy than ever. They use technology in virtually every aspect of their lives—from how they communicate to how they shop. It's just how they live today.

So it's no surprise they expect modern multifamily properties to offer the latest smart technologies too. They want your building to deliver a level of convenience that works with their busy lifestyles. And they want the aesthetics that help make it a desirable place to live.

How they gain access to common areas is an important part of the experience.

Of course, it isn't just about what residents demand. You need to consider your management team too.

Your property managers want to be able to deliver the services residents need quickly and efficiently. However, they have a never-ending to-do list. Dealing with managing access rights, helping locked-out residents enter properties, and enabling various services to get on-site are hassles they could simply do without.



# Why electronic access? Why now?

## **Electronic access solves many of these problems**

By removing traditional physical keys, an electronic access solution enables residents to access different areas of your building with the touch of a phone, card, fob, or simple PIN code.

It allows property managers to quickly and easily change access permissions, enabling both residents and support services such as maintenance to enter individual apartments and shared areas.

And it affords a new level of security and visibility, together with the ability to cancel or limit access at the touch of a button.

More than this, a modern electronic access system will help set your property apart from the competition enabling you to better attract today's discerning residents.

## **What's holding you back?**

While you probably understand why electronic access makes sense, implementing a solution (especially for the first time) can appear complex. The good news? It doesn't have to be.

With the right approach, you can make the transition to electronic access straightforward and hassle-free. To help, in this guide we'll give you some pointers to set your project up for success.





# The anatomy of an electronic access solution

Let's start by looking at what's involved in an access solution. There are two main parts: the hardware and the software that manages it.

## **The hardware component**

When we talk about hardware, this splits into four main areas:

1. The physical locks on your doors—everything from resident and exterior doors to shared areas and garage access
2. The credentials residents and staff use to gain entry—these may be in the form of access cards, fobs, PIN codes, or digital keys on their phones
3. Updater control panels—used to activate credentials, ensure they are up to date, and provide in-depth access audit trails
4. A smart hub to connect door hardware to third-party systems

You may not need every element, it will depend on your specific property and individual needs.



# The anatomy of an electronic access solution

## **Software control, integration, and management**

The second part of the solution is the software that makes managing the system easy and intuitive. (In a Yale solution, this is our cloud-based Yale Accentra™ multifamily management software.)

This enables property managers to quickly and easily manage access rights for residents, guests, and employees. It allows mobile credentials to be set up and activated immediately, giving residents access to their properties with a minimum of fuss.

The software also allows property managers to issue one-time PIN codes. This code grants a resident access should they lock themselves out, lose their access card/fob, or if someone needs to unlock a door in an emergency.

Beyond setting up and managing credentials, the system will enable you to schedule or restrict access for specific areas or individual roles. For example, you may have a fitness complex that is only available at specific times for safety reasons. You'll also have areas that can only be accessed by certain members of your team.

More advanced solutions will also enable access hardware to be integrated with third-party systems. This enables property owners and managers to create a seamless solution incorporating multiple services that can be controlled and managed from a single interface.

Fundamentally, the software is the brains of the system.

# Putting people first

As you begin to explore implementing electronic access, the temptation is to start by counting the number of access points you have and looking at your physical infrastructure. Makes sense, right?

In reality, the better place to begin is to explore the kind of experience you want to give your residents and staff.

## **Think like a resident**

Try this: put yourself in a resident's shoes and walk from curb-side to apartment door (and to any other areas they may need to access).

Think about a prospective resident and the kind of experience that would make them want to live in your property.

What about services, employees, and visitors? When, where, and how will they need to access the property?



# Putting people first

## **Think like a property manager**

Now, what about management? Where are the areas of frustration for your property managers? Where do they currently face challenges and wasted time in trying to delight your residents? What would a great experience for them look like?

## **What are your security needs?**

Next, consider security. Do different areas require different levels of access control? What records do you need to keep for who has gained access to the property and specific areas? What specific building regulations do you need to meet?

## **And what about integration?**

Finally, what other systems might a solution need to work with? Can you integrate access into other systems such as apartment automation, security, energy management, or property management solutions? Do you want to enable cost-saving or revenue-generating capabilities such as home sharing and self-guided tours?

## **You're all set**

Armed with this information, you'll be in a better place to work with a provider to plan a solution that delivers for your residents, staff, and business objectives. You'll be able to spot areas that might need further consideration. And you can avoid issues that could slow progress or result in unforeseen costs.





# Planning for success

Now that you have a picture of what success looks like for your property, you can begin planning the components of your system.

You'll want to work with a specialist for the design and installation of your access solution, but you can make the entire process smoother by helping them understand your specific needs.

## Key questions to consider

- What are you looking to accomplish? For example, you may want to simplify key control and management, deliver a better resident experience, restrict access to specific areas, reduce employee theft, obtain access and usage data.
- Which areas do you need to manage access to? These may include residences, common areas (such as a gym, garage, laundry room, waste disposal area), employee-only service areas, and the outer perimeter.
- Beyond residencies, what other kinds of doors do you need to secure? Anything from the main entrance and elevators to offices and garages.
- What kind of access control do you already have in place?
- Do you want to be able to manage your property remotely via any internet connected device?



# Planning for success



- What network infrastructure—WiFi or Ethernet—is available?
- Do you have a preference for how you want to allow people to access the property? Have you already decided to use access cards/fobs, smartphones, or keypads?
- Do you need to limit access to certain time schedules?
- Will you want to simplify the management of the system and have it available on any mobile device?
- What kind of aesthetics are you looking for?
- Finally, beyond the core electronic access system, are there other systems you'll need your solution to integrate with?

## **Putting the right plan in place**

With this information, you should be able to talk to potential providers about the optimum electronic access solution for your needs.

They'll be able to help you understand the options available and the pros and cons of each. And they will be able to spot any challenges you'll need to overcome for a smooth installation and worry-free operation of the system.

Ultimately, they'll be able to work with you to deliver on the experience you want to create for both your residents and property managers.

# Making your project a reality

With the plan established, you'll need to bring together the right team to make it a reality. It's important that you get input from all the major stakeholders on the project to ensure you get the insights and feedback you need. This will help avoid blindspots that may only become apparent when your system goes live.

## 01

### **Assemble your team**

While every project is unique, the key people/groups to involve will typically include:

- **The developer/property owner**—to set the vision for the property
- **The property manager (or management company representative)**—to bring valuable insights around the day-to-day operations
- **The architect**—to translate the owner's vision into a built environment
- **The security consultant**—to ensure the right access control is implemented across the property
- **The general contractor**—to be responsible for the build and fit out of the property
- **A multifamily access specialist**—such as one of our experts to help translate the desired resident and management experience into an integrated access solution

# Making your project a reality

## 02 **Select your partner**

When contracting an installation partner, you'll want one that understands your needs and has the experience to make the entire process hassle-free.

Questions to ask prospective partners include:

- What are the infrastructure requirements for the solution?
- How long will it take to install?
- If I need onsite support, how can you help?
- How do local codes impact my hardware options?
- Are there any new local/national trends that I should be considering?

## 03 **The who, what, why, when**

Once you have your partner on board, you'll want them to outline how they will run your project. Typically, a Yale electronic access design and installation follows a number of steps:

1. A specification is written for the project outlining what you are looking to achieve and the relevant must-haves for the project (this will be determined by the core team above)
2. The general contractor receives bids/quotes for the project from our channel partners and the project is awarded
3. Our channel partner provides details of products/services to be supplied to the general contractor for approval and then orders the relevant materials
4. There is a project kickoff meeting between the channel partner and the end-user/property manager to determine how the system will be setup
5. The channel partner sets up the software/system, hardware is installed on openings, and locks/readers are commissioned and tested
6. The channel partner trains end-users on system to ensure they have a thorough understanding of how to manage access and support residents
7. The channel partner provides ongoing customer support during implementation and post-implementation

# Making your project a reality

## 04

### **Keeping existing residents on-board**

Many projects involve retrofitting a new solution into an existing property. This, of course, means removing traditional hardware and replacing it with new electronic alternatives. You'll want to do this with minimal disruption to existing residents.

To do this, we advise:

- Being clear in communicating why you're making the move to electronic access control and the benefits residents will see
- Presenting a timetable for the project and when people can expect to see changes and what that will involve

- Ensuring your in-house team is fully up to speed on the new system and is able to onboard residents quickly and easily
- Having support materials available to help residents and employees deal with any questions and ensuring your team is on-hand to answer questions and provide assistance

With the right vision, plan, and partner in place, you should be able to fully implement your vision for electronic access and begin realizing the significant benefits it offers.

## Take the next step

We'd love to show you how Yale's electronic access solutions can help you deliver a better experience for your residents and save valuable time for your property managers.

If you already have a project in the planning phase and want to see what a Yale solution might involve, visit our solution builder tool »

Or, to get help and advice on any aspect of multifamily access control, our team would love to assist you, contact them at [www.yalecommercial.com/en/contact-us](http://www.yalecommercial.com/en/contact-us)



# About Yale Commercial

As one of the oldest international brands, Yale is among the most respected names in the lock industry with millions of locks in use worldwide.

A company born of innovation, Yale has pioneered the evolution of the locking industry for over 170 years. Offering a broad portfolio of door hardware, locks, and software management solutions to secure your home or business, Yale continues to innovate new products for both residential and commercial applications.

Yale is part of ASSA ABLOY, the global leader in door opening solutions, dedicated to satisfying end-user needs for security, safety, and convenience.

**Learn more at [www.yalecommercial.com](http://www.yalecommercial.com)**

