



Key and Asset Security for Sports Stadiums



The Challenge of Securing Today's Stadiums

The world of professional sports is high-octane, in the boardroom as well as on the field. NFL teams generate \$286 million per year on average, while MLB franchises average \$237 million per year. Major sports stadiums are designed to contribute to the multifaceted nature of the business. These state-of-the-art venues perform a wide variety of functions beyond providing a location for the individual games and giving fans access – rather, they deliver a complete experience around each event in order to create lasting memories and loyal fans. They also help their teams to be competitive with training facilities and practice areas, provide medical care for players and staff, offer concessions and souvenirs, provide VIP experiences, arrange and orchestrate on-field events such as halftime shows or fan engagement games, and offer parking and transportation. In addition, because of their size and features, many stadiums are often host to other crowd-drawing events, such as concerts or conventions. This huge variety of goals must be met while ensuring the safety and security of every individual and asset within the stadium.

Because of the multi-functional nature of the sports stadium, it is often an extremely complex venue. A stadium must include varied areas of security, multiple services provided in different areas of the arena, tiered accesses for VIPs, talent, vendors, staff, player, fans and others, and facilitate the safe flow of large crowds. Properly securing every area of a stadium, while also ensuring that appropriate access is efficiently granted to authorized persons at multiple levels of security, is a massive undertaking that must be done correctly to avoid creating major security risks.

As the world of professional sports grows, and the complexity of sporting events expands to draw in ever more fans, the need for security is only increasing. In this whitepaper, we will discuss several areas where stadium security improvements can be considered, and some solutions to key security issues faced in modern stadiums.

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Varied Areas of Access

Sports stadiums serve a wide range of functions, and therefore have a need for a wide range of security levels and access points. Practice fields and locker rooms must be easily available to players and team staff, but not to attendees, and may occasionally require temporary passes for charity organizations, temporary training staff, or others. Often, team staff and management keep their day to day offices in the stadium, which may need to be secured from other members of stadium staff who should not have access to team areas. VIP rooms are often made available as needed, and should be properly secured when not in use, as employees may utilize these comfortable areas to sneak away and relax during work hours (and daring fans may attempt to break into them during events to create their own VIP experience). The field itself often has very specific permissions in terms of access – cheerleading squads and network TV staff may require access, but fans need to be kept from rushing the players. In some cases, attendees may need to be granted special access to the field, such as during a concert where some of the seating may be placed there.

Key management systems can help to manage these varying accesses, which may change not only from day to day but from day to night as different events take



place or the stadium is utilized for different functions. A key control system can easily be configured to give temporary access, such as for VIPs or talent, while ensuring that staff with access to some parts of the stadium are only granted access to those areas. In addition, two-factor authentication in place on key control systems can make it so that a second authorized person is required to access—and to return—individual keys, to ensure that they are not squirreled away to grant access to restricted areas at a later date (to accost a favorite player or sleep on a VIP room couch).

Managing Valuable Assets

A variety of smartphones, tablets and other handheld devices are often used in today's stadiums to efficiently perform everyday operations. On the field and in the coach's booths, laptops and tablets are used to choose gameday strategies and communicate with staff and players during a game. These devices contain sensitive player information, team strategies, and other data that could be misused. Mobile devices are being utilized more and more in concessions and point of sale, particularly for vendors on the move such as those selling concert merchandise. These devices not only facilitate transactions with fans or attendees, but can also be used to monitor buying behavior and collect fan information for mailing lists, fan clubs, and other usage. In addition, many daily workers at stadiums, from maintenance staff to the players themselves have their own mobile devices which they need to put away safely while they do their jobs.

Securing these devices from theft is essential. Asset management systems that are equipped with RFID technology can help to ensure that these devices are stored securely between or during games. In addition to locking valuable assets safely away when not in use, RFID-enabled asset management allows security to locate all of the assets present in the system, keep a record of who has removed a device and from where, and have a notification sent to them when that device is replaced, whether within its original locker or another locker within the system. RFID tags can be easily placed on essential assets and tagged into the system, making it simple to securely store items when not in use and track their removal and replacement.

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Fleet Management

A stadium often has a fleet of vehicles, including those used for transporting players and equipment in addition to emergency response vehicles, that also requires secure and efficient key management. It's critical that these keys be instantly available when needed – particularly if a player is injured – but also essential to ensure that they cannot easily be removed by unauthorized users to take vehicles on joyrides, use them for personal transportation, or even steal them.

A key management system for vehicle keys ensures that keys are only removed by authorized drivers, that notifications are sent to the appropriate personnel when keys are removed, and that keys can be securely returned with a similar notification at any location within the facility. Reservation capabilities and email notifications keep security and fleet drivers up to date on key locations (and vehicle usage by association), so someone expecting to use a vehicle is never surprised when it isn't there. With consistent monitoring of key removal or return locations, it's much easier to keep track of vehicle usage across the facility and find out if a vehicle is not where it's supposed to be. As well, key security prevents the need for expensive rekeying of vehicles should their keys go missing.

Healthcare

With players pushing themselves to the physical limit comes the constant risk of injury. In the event of an injury during an event, getting a player to treatment as fast as possible is essential, and many players incur injuries that require long-term care or regular reevaluation. Many sports teams therefore employ their own set of healthcare professionals such as doctors, chiropractors, physical therapists, and others, and offer healthcare facilities on site at stadiums. By controlling access to these facilities, security management can ensure that equipment, drugs, and other necessary tools are readily accessible to healthcare staff, and not accessible to those who might misuse them. Key management systems can help control access, mitigating some of the risks that on-site healthcare facilities present for sports teams.

Ensuring that drugs are given out when needed – and only when needed – is a necessary security procedure for any healthcare facility, including those in stadiums. When a key management system is in place, opiates and other controlled substances can be dispensed quickly and accurately, and kept securely locked when not being used with a key which only accessible to designated users. Key management systems also make it simple to track which individuals have accessed a drug dispensary or storage area and can send notifications when a restricted substance is accessed to ensure that management is aware of the situation.

Use of key management systems can also help ensure that the keys for important, restricted, or hazardous equipment



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and areas, such as MRI or X-ray machines, are only removed by users that have proper authorization. They can also make it easier to return keys by networking different cabinets in a single system across a large healthcare area, or even across the stadium from where they were accessed. Notifications that are sent when keys are removed can assist management or security personnel in keeping a record of who has accessed these facilities and when.

Security for a Large Venue

A stadium is a huge facility, both in physical size and in expanse. The entirety of the facility may go beyond the stadium itself to include multiple outlying buildings, practice fields, parking facilities, even associated performance venues. And the size of the stadium cannot be overstated—multiple floors with scattered concession stands, VIP areas, maintenance and storage areas, locker rooms, TV facilities, and many more moving parts that are required for a sports stadium to function.

Each area requires proper security, often tailored to the needs of that section (such as higher levels of access control for VIP or maintenance areas). Every section will have its own authorized users—who may require highly tailored authorizations for very specific parts of the stadium (such as a TV crew that can interview players in the locker room and have access to the field but aren't allowed behind the concessions register, and concessions staff that don't have access to the field). Some users may be authorized for disparate locations far across the stadium from each other, which would make returning keys arduous.

Ensuring that keys and access control keycards are easily obtained and returned across a large facility like a stadium can be a large undertaking. Key control can make the process much simpler by installing a single system that easily inventories keys throughout the stadium, and makes keys returnable at any cabinet while logging all entries and removals for easy access by security staff. A key control system makes it easy to keep track of all of the keys necessary to operate a stadium while also making their use efficient and simple for authorized users.



Conclusion

A stadium is a massive facility that plays many roles, hosting large influxes of people from attendees to staff to TV crews to visiting teams. The many moving parts of a stadium can be a challenge to keep properly secure and require a many-tiered access control system to make sure that the hundreds of thousands of people in the stadium only enter areas they are authorized to be in. To keep the stadium secure, thousands or even tens of thousands of keys may be required, and a huge variety of policies put in place. A key control system can organize all of these keys, ensure their removal only by authorized users, keep track of which cabinet keys are in or when they were removed and by whom, and keep security updated with notifications upon a variety of actions. It is an essential solution to help keep stadium operations running smoothly and safely.