

# LOCKSMITH CONSUMER TIPS

## CONSUMER TIPS FOR HIRING A LOCKSMITH

Chances are you'll need the services of a locksmith someday: You lose keys, lock yourself out of a home or car, need your locks changed, or need a key for an existing lock. As with any profession, scammers exist. Unscrupulous technicians can damage locks, charge exorbitant fees, and sell security information about customers' houses to burglars.

In California, locksmiths must be licensed by the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services, part of the Department of Consumer Affairs.<sup>1</sup>

A licensed, professional locksmith can open any lock on a residential door. Cars, particularly those built after 2005, can usually be opened by a locksmith entering a code from the vehicle identification number into a handheld device.

## SUGGESTED TIPS IN FINDING A LOCKSMITH

If you are locked out of your car, call your auto insurance company first. It may have a list of recommended locksmiths or may offer locksmith services as part of its benefits.

As with any service, references from people you know can also help you find a reputable, licensed locksmith to contact.

### INQUIRE BEFORE YOU HIRE

- Verify the license online at [www.bsis.ca.gov](http://www.bsis.ca.gov) or call (800) 952-5210.
- Research the business through your local Better Business Bureau. Visit [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org), or consult your phone directory or a local BBB office.
- When you call for locksmith services, be sure the dispatcher gives you an estimate of the charges.

### BE ON GUARD

Ask to see the license of the locksmith you hire when they arrive. Locksmiths are required by law to carry a pocket version of their license.<sup>2</sup> If anything seems wrong, stop the process. If the locksmith threatens you or insists on a charge for showing up, call the police immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> [BPC 6980.10](#)

<sup>2</sup> [BPC 6980.48](#)

Make sure the locksmith gives you a receipt that includes a company name, [license number](#), local address, and phone number.<sup>3</sup> Also be certain that the receipt notes the cost of all parts, services, and the full amount you were charged.<sup>4</sup>

NOTE: If the company performs work at a single site that exceeds \$500, a contractor's license is also required. For more information, contact the Contractors State License Board at (916) 255-3900 or (800) 321-2752 or visit [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov). Local government may also require a business permit or license.

**TO HELP PROTECT YOURSELF, HIRE A LICENSED LOCKSMITH.**

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<sup>3</sup> [6980.53](#)

<sup>4</sup> [6980.69](#)