I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish policies and procedures for the issuance, management, replacement, and accountability of Courthouse security keys and electronic key cards.

II. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Court Services Division to prevent inmate escape, limit access to unauthorized areas, and maintain the overall integrity of the courts complex. This will be accomplished through a key control system, documentation and staff training.

III. DEFINITIONS

Staff: Any member of the Sheriff’s Office, sworn or civilian.

Issued Keys: Keys that are authorized as issued equipment by the Court Services Division. These types of keys include interior and exterior courtroom keys, mechanical room keys, public access keys, card reader system override keys, and electronic key cards.

Security Keys: Any key that is secured in a key cabinet located in the Control Room and/or behind the courtrooms, which is issued on a need basis. These keys are recorded in the Master Key Control Log when issued.

Key Cabinet: A lockable cabinet used to store security keys.

Master Key Control Log Book: Used to document all security keys removed and returned to a key cabinet.

Daily Log Book: Used to document the inventory of all security keys at the beginning and end of each day.

Electronic Key Card: A plastic polymer card assigned to individual staff members that provides access throughout the court complex.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Staff Issued Keys
1. Upon assignment to the Court Services Section, each deputy shall be issued the following keys by a Courthouse Services Section/Unit Supervisor:

   a. Courthouse Master Key
   b. Courtroom Key Box Key
   c. Mechanical Room Key
   d. Card Reader System Override Key
   e. Electronic Key Cards

2. The Court Services Division Commander, or designee, maintains an inventory of the keys assigned to all Court Services Division deputies. When a deputy leaves the Court Services Division, the keys shall be returned to a supervisor.

3. Court Services Division deputies shall be responsible for any keys issued to them.

4. The Temporary Detention supervisor shall maintain key control of all Security Keys.

B. Key Accountability

1. The Control Room deputy shall account for and inventory all security keys at the beginning and end of each business day. Both inventory checks shall be documented each day in the Daily Log Book.

2. These inventories shall be verified by the on-duty supervisor. In addition, these supervisors shall verify the accountability of the keys in the Court Services Section Office key box.

3. If, during the daily inventory, a deputy determines that a key is lost or damaged, he/she shall immediately inform a supervisor. The deputy performing the inventory shall document the facts on an in-house report.

4. If a deputy loses or damages any security key or issued key, that deputy shall immediately inform a supervisor and complete an in-house report.

5. The in-house report shall contain, but not be limited to, the following information:

   a. Date and time the loss or damage was discovered
   b. Circumstances relating to the loss or damage
   c. Specific identification of the key(s) and the doors it operates
d. Steps taken to retrieve or replace the lost or damaged key

6. If the lost key cannot be found or if there is sufficient reason to believe the keys could have been copied, the Division Commander shall authorize a change in the appropriate locks.

7. Duplication of keys shall only be under the direction of the Division Commander or designee. Duplications shall be provided through written documentation to Loudoun County General Services. Unauthorized possession, alteration, duplication, or impression making of any security key is prohibited.

8. A supervisor will investigate any lost keys or key cards and document the findings in a memorandum, which he/she will forward to the Division Commander.

C. Handling of Keys

1. All Court Services deputies shall observe the proper key-handling procedures described below:

a. Carry and use keys as inconspicuously as possible

b. Keys shall never be tossed or thrown

c. Do not refer to keys by number. Instead, refer to the keys by their function

d. Never, under any circumstances, allow anyone other than authorized personnel to handle any keys

e. Do not force a key into a lock

f. Do not attempt to repair a lock. This shall only be done by an authorized locksmith

g. Contact a supervisor immediately if a key or lock is defective

2. All holding area keys shall be returned to the Control Room or the Court Security Office key box at the end of each day.