

FROM: HQ AFCESA/CES
139 Barnes Drive, Suite 1
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SUBJECT: **Engineering Technical Letter (ETL) 97-22, Competing Facility Keying Systems**

1. Purpose. This ETL provides mandatory guidance to ensure full and open competition in acquisition of facility keying systems.

NOTE: The use of the name or mark of any specific manufacturer, commercial product, commodity, or service in this publication does not imply endorsement by the Air Force.

2. Application: All Air Force installations.

2.1. Authority. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Part 6, *Competition Requirements*).

2.2. Effective Date: Immediately.

2.3. Expiration: Five years from date of issue.

2.4. Ultimate Recipients: Air Force Base Civil Engineers (BCEs).

3. Requirements.

3.1. Background. In the past, some bases have issued restrictive project specifications requiring locksets and lock cylinders with key-removable cores from the Best Lock Corporation to the exclusion of equivalent products from other manufacturers. Most BCEs prefer a single keying system throughout their area of responsibility. A single keying system for an entire base can be conveniently and economically managed by using lock cylinders with key-removable cores. The Best Lock Corporation previously held a patent on this feature; however, a number of manufacturers (Arrow, Falcon, Sargent, and others) now produce key-removable cores that may be interchanged with locksets and lock cylinders from other manufacturers. This interchangeability makes possible the seamless extension of existing keying

systems, regardless of manufacturer. Therefore, the specification of proprietary systems is not justified.

3.2. Acquisition of New Systems. Plans, drawings, specifications, standards, and purchase descriptions used to acquire new facility keying systems will state only the Government's minimum needs and will not unnecessarily restrict competition.

3.2.1. Project hardware specifications will not require particular brand names, products, or features of products peculiar to one manufacturer, unless research indicates the items are not available from other companies; or similar products from other companies do not meet, or cannot be modified to meet, project requirements.

3.2.2. Authority to contract without providing for full and open competition must be supported by a Justification and Approval (J&A) in accordance with the FAR, Part 6.

3.2.3. The BCE must verify the requirement for this method of acquisition by coordination with Contracting.

3.3. Extension of Existing Systems. To extend an integrated master keying system within a designated area, the project specification must identify the manufacturer of locks presently installed and state the requirement for integrated keying with that system. To allow bids from other manufacturers who can meet specified requirements, the specification must:

- Indicate that "or equal" systems are acceptable.
- Define the primary characteristics of the system needed by the Government.
- Identify all known "equal" systems.

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