

Onity Hotel Lock Security Issues - Recommendations for Hotel Operators

You may have read or seen the story that has exploded all over the web and news about the Onity hotel lock hackings that surfaced recently when Matthew Allen Cook was arrested last month in Houston, Texas for breaking into several Houston hotel rooms with an electronic device. The TODAY Show even featured a segment on the issue regarding the tool developed by hackers to open Onity electronic locks, which can be concealed in magic markers or iPhone cases. Tom McElroy, a principal at The Hospitality Security Consulting Group, LLC, provides recommendations to hotel operators who use Onity locks.



Recommendations for Hotels with Onity Locks Installed

To date, Onity has proposed a number of solutions, including the insertion of a mechanical cap into the communications/power port to block access by foreign programmable devices.

Contact Onity

If your hotel has Onity locks on guest room doors, please contact Onity immediately to discuss the best solution for your property. At a minimum, we recommend you install the caps to block access to the information/power port. Please note, Onity has indicated that, with a small percentage of locks, the installation of the cap may cause the lock to overheat so we recommend that you monitor your locks after installation for this issue and, if necessary, contact Onity directly regarding any necessary replacement locks.

Front Desk Placard and Response to Guest Inquiries

For hotels with Onity locks, we recommend that you place a placard at the front desk reminding guests to: (1) store their valuables in the hotel's safety deposit box and (2) use all locks on the doors to secure their rooms. You may also want to post the safety instructions on the back of guest room doors. We also recommend that you provide all front desk staff with an update on this issue so that they can respond to guest inquiries. If your guests inquire about this issue and you have Onity locks, we suggest the following statement:

"This is a serious issue that is affecting the entire hotel industry. Your safety and security is our highest priority and we are working with Onity to address this issue. We have implemented the fix provided by Onity, but we always recommend that you follow standard safety precautions and engage all locks to secure your room."

If Your Hotel Does Not Have Onity Locks Installed

If your hotel does not have Onity locks installed, we don't recommend taking any action, but suggest that you respond with the following statement if guests

inquire about this issue:

"We do not have Onity locks installed at our hotel."

If You are Contacted by the Media About this Issue

If your property has Onity locks and you decide to comment about steps your property is taking, please consider using the following statement:

"This is a serious issue that is affecting the entire hotel industry. However, the safety and security of our guests is always our highest priority and we are working with the manufacturer of the locks, to address this issue."



With a career that expands more than fifteen years of law enforcement experience and twenty-one years of private sector safety and security management experience, Tom is knowledgably and adept in a variety of law enforcement, safety and security related principals and programs.

Prior to becoming an independent hospitality centric safety and security consultant, Tom spent 9 years with Hilton Hotels Corporation most recently serving as the Director - Enterprise Information Security Office Incident Response Team. In this role he was responsible for directing and supporting all aspects of risk management, monitoring, reporting, and investigations of all real or suspected breaches of Hilton's Privacy and Information Security operations across an enterprise consisting of 3000+ hotel properties in 77 countries.

