

Operations & Services Department
Head Office, Baroda

CIRCULAR TO ALL BRANCHES/OFFICES IN INDIA

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Custody of various keys

Please refer Book of Instructions Volume – 26/Version 2.0 related to Security where in custody of keys of branch premises and others are mentioned.

We, hereby, once again reiterate the points as per Book of Instructions regarding custody of keys as under:

Custody of Keys of Branch premises

- (a) In the context of ensuring security of the Bank's operations, it is emphasized that the keys of the branch premises should remain in the custody of a responsible official while taking care at the same time that the keys are available for opening the branch premises for cleaning or in any emergency situations.
- (b) There are certain other storage media available now as with the advent of computers, there is a constant endeavour to replace the physical form of records etc. with records/data maintained on Hard Disk Drive of the computers, pen drives, cartridges; CDs etc. at our computerized branches. Besides computers, other sophisticated & costly machines like fax, photocopiers, scanners, note counting machines etc. are kept in the open banking hall. This necessitates a need for taking still greater measures for safety and holding of keys of the branch premises assumes greater importance.
- (c) It has also been observed that sometimes the branch premises are not opened on time as the person(s) holding the keys is/are on leave or suddenly proceed on leave for some unavoidable reason. This hampers customer service and bank's image gets tarnished.
- (d) In view of the above, Branches should strictly adhere to the following guidelines in regard to custody of keys of the premises:

(A) For branches having two or more than two officers- (including Branch Manager)

(i) There should be three sets of keys of branch premises as under:

Keys	With whom	Remarks
1st Set	With the Branch Head	One of these three key holders must get the branch opened early for cleaning as also get the branch closed at day end. The branch should be cleaned up in presence of an Officer/Head Cashier so authorized by the Branch Head.
2nd Set	Second key to be held by the next senior officer (Accountant /Joint Manager) OR the officer who is staying nearer to the branch;	
3rd Set	Wherever Armed Guard/ Watchman / Head Peon is available holding of third set may be entrusted to them. However, in branches wherever Armed Guard/ Watchman/ Head Peon is not available, but having more than two officers, the 3rd set be held by third officer posted in the branches. Only in branches wherever neither Armed Guard/ Watchman/ Head Peon nor Third Officer is posted, the third set of keys be entrusted to a clerical staff (other than Head Cashier)	

- (ii) In case of loss of any set of keys the branch should arrange to replace all the locks of the lost keys to ensure the security of the branch under intimation to Regional Authority.
- (iii) We should not restrict holding of keys to night watchman. Wherever Armed Guard/ Watchman/ Head Peon is posted, they be entrusted with the duty of, holding the 3rd set of keys.
- (iv) When the person(other than the Branch Head) holding the keys proceeds on leave, the keys should be handed over to the Branch manager who should authorize in writing another officer/ cashier to hold the keys during the absence of the permanent incumbent.
- (v) When the Branch Manager proceeds on leave, the keys should be handed over to the person who is deputed to acts as the Branch Manager

(B) For branches having one officer and one clerk (Head Cashier)

- (i) There should be two sets of keys of branch premises.

Keys	With whom	Remarks
1st Set	With Branch Head	One of these two key Holders must get the branch opened early for cleaning as also get the branch closed at day end. The branch should be cleaned up in presence of the Branch Manager/ Head Cashier so authorized by the Branch Head
2nd Set	Second key to be kept by the Head Cashier authorized by the Branch Manager, in writing to hold the keys. However, hereto, the staggering of duties of Head Cashier may be avoided. It should be ensured that work is completed within prescribed hours.	

- (ii) Where there is a permanent watchman on duty at the branch, he may be entrusted with one set of keys (3rd Set in this case) with strict instructions to keep proper custody and hand over the keys to the other relieving watchman. This arrangement should be regulated by the Branch Manager from time to time.
- (iii) In case of loss of any set of keys, the branch should arrange to replace all the locks of the lost keys to ensure the security of the branch under intimation to Regional Authority.
- (iv) We should not restrict holding of keys to night watchman. Wherever Armed Guard/ Watchman/ Head Peon is posted, they be entrusted with the duty of holding the 3rd set of keys
- (v) When the branch manager proceeds on leave, the keys should be handed over to the person who is deputed to act as the Branch Manager.

- (e) Branches must also ensure that the branch is invariably opened well before time and the keys of the branch premises do not remain with un-authorized person(s).

In addition to these points mentioned above, some operational guidelines related to general security arrangements are as under:

- The guns and cartridges of the branch should be kept in a metal cabinet which should be properly grouted/fixed in the floor or the wall. The above cabinet should be fixed to wall/floor outside the cash safe room/strong room so that the guard is armed before opening of the Strong Room/Cash Safe Room/Safe. The cabinet should have proper locking arrangement and the keys be kept under dual control.



- Duplicate keys of the vault and the bins should be kept in safe custody of other branch of own or other public sector bank.

Further the guidelines related to keys of strong room, safes etc. are mentioned in Book of Instruction Volume-15/Version 2.0 related to remittances as under:

(C) Keys of strong room, safes etc.:

(i) Custody of keys:

- (a) The custody of cash safe keys is the responsibility of the joint custodians of cash. When Branch Manager/ Joint Manager, who is the joint custodian happens to leave the headquarters on holidays, the keys should be left with the Joint Manager/Branch Manager respectively duly kept in a sealed envelope signed across the flaps.
- (b) During the absence of the Branch Manager from the headquarters, the Joint Manager should generally look after the bank's interest and the cash safe should be opened by him along with the Head Cashier only on the next working day.
- (c) The Head Cashier should not part with the keys of the cash safe under any circumstances. While proceeding on leave, he should, with the Branch Manager's prior permission, handover the safe keys to his authorised assistant who should clearly be instructed not to part with the keys.
- (d) The custody and changes in the custody of keys should be recorded in the Key Register (R-88) under authentication.
- (e) Guard key for the safe wherever provided should be kept with Branch Manager and he should keep it separately from other keys in a safe place.

(ii) Safeguards to be observed by the custodians of keys:

- (a) Staff members holding keys of the safe, strong room, cabinets, etc. should not part with the keys without prior permission.
- (b) The keys should be held in a key chain which should normally be kept tied to the coat/trouser pocket and should not be left in a drawer of the table.
- (c) In case it is not convenient to do so on account of holding large number of keys, the keys, other than cash safe keys, may be left overnight in a steel cupboard under dual control. The key of the cupboard should be held in the key chain.

(iii) Duplicate keys:

The duplicate set of keys of the cash safe and the strong room should under no circumstances be left in the safe or in the strong room. They should be lodged in a sealed packet for safe custody along with duplicate keys of important safes, cabinets containing documents, securities, etc. with the nearest main branch of our Bank by all the other local branches at the centre. Where there is only one branch of the bank at the centre, the said branch should lodge the duplicate keys with the local office of the State Bank of India, its associate banks or any other bank approved by the Regional Office.

In the absence of a branch of any other bank at the place, the packet containing duplicate keys should be lodged for safe custody with the nearest branch of the Bank. The Main Office may deposit the duplicate keys with any other local branch. While keeping duplicate keys of strong room and safe in safe custody, grease or vaseline should be applied to prevent the keys from getting rusted and the other keys should be wrapped separately in polythene or oil paper.

They should thereafter be packed in a tin or card-board container along with a list signed by the joint custodians and sealed properly. A duplicate copy of the list of keys signed by the joint custodians should be attached to the relative safe custody receipt.

Branches should ensure that the duplicate keys lodged for safe custody are deliverable only against the discharge of the Branch Manager/Joint Manager jointly with the Head Cashier. The safe custody receipt should securely be kept in a cabinet outside the strong room under the custody of the Branch Manager.

Particulars of the safe custody receipt obtained from the other bank/branch should be recorded in the Key Register.

(iv) Loss of cash key:

- (a) If cash key, either with the Head Cashier or Branch Manager/Joint Manager is lost, immediately protective action should be taken by locking the cash safe with guard key.
- (b) Duplicate cash keys from the branch where they are lodged should be brought.
- (c) Cash safe should then be opened in presence of joint custodians and cash counted to tally with the cash balances recorded in the cash balance book. Loss of cash key be also recorded in Key Register.
- (d) Loss of cash key with the circumstances in which it is lost should be immediately reported to Regional Office and instructions be sought.



- (e) The manufacturers of cash safe should be contacted urgently and the lock should be changed. The fresh set of keys be obtained and new key numbers noted in the Key Register.
- (f) Duplicate set of new keys be lodged with the branch with whom arrangements have been made.
- (g) Similar procedure may be followed if any attempt to tamper with cash safe/lock is noticed except the fact that bringing of duplicate cash key may not be necessary. However, the cash safe lock should be got invariably replaced by the manufacturers of safe and till such time guard key should be continued to be operated.
- (h) The keys should be kept with the person and not in drawers etc.
- (i) Lock the cash safe in the branch with Guard Keys positively at the beginning of these holidays and ensure that all exits / entries/ window /doors in the branch / office are locked and secured.

Branches are advised to ensure compliance of the aforesaid guidelines, Regions/Zones are advised to ensure that the branches in their jurisdiction are strictly adhere to the above guidelines.

Yours faithfully,


(Pankaj Mittal)
General Manager,
Operations & Services

