



How to Become a Locksmith

Locksmithing is one of the world's oldest and most honorable professions. With the recent advances in computer and electronics technology, there are many more lucrative and specialized areas for the professional locksmith to pursue. No longer is the locksmith restricted to installing/repairing mechanical locks and cutting keys. Electronic access control, sophisticated electronic safe locks, electronically encoded automotive keys and locks and closed circuit TV are just a few of the areas that locksmiths are branching into or specializing in. With the proper training, almost anyone can become a locksmith. You can receive training from a number of sources which include technical schools, correspondence courses, trade publications, apprenticeship programs, and professional locksmith associations such as ALOA.

ALOA conducts Certified Instruction throughout the year at the ALOA Training Center in Dallas, Texas, on a regional basis at locally sponsored events and at the ALOA Educational Conference and Security Expo, which was this year in Orlando FL in early August. Next Year's ALOA 2017 Convention will be in Rosemont, IL with classes beginning on July 16th and trade show starting on July 21st.

As an international trade association, ALOA recognizes professionalism and proficiency among locksmiths by granting a designation ALOA Fundamental Locksmith, (AFL). Also after examinations students can be certified with a designation such as Certified Registered Locksmith (CRL), Certified Professional Locksmith (CPL), Certified Master Locksmith (CML) and Certified Automotive Locksmith (CAL). Available to all locksmiths, the Proficiency Registration Program (PRP) evaluates, through participation tracking and testing, the educational and technical competence of dedicated individuals in a wide range of subjects such as hardware installation, key duplication, automotive, high security cylinders, safe and vault locks, master keying, alarms, and access control devices.

Certification Levels

To achieve the *first* level of certification, Certified Registered Locksmith **CRL**, a passing grade (70 %+) is required on the mandatory section and any two electives.

To achieve the *intermediate* level of certification, Certified Professional Locksmith **CPL**, a passing grade (70 %+) is required on each of any twelve additional electives.

To achieve the *highest* level of certification, Certified Master Locksmith **CML**, a passing grade (70 %+) is required on each of any nine of the remaining electives.

ALOA Fundamental Locksmith (AFL)

The ALOA Fundamental Locksmith (AFL) designation has completed ALOA's Six Day Basic Locksmithing Course and then has passed the after class examination given on the last day. An AFL has enough general Locksmithing knowledge to function as an apprentice locksmith. An AFL is

recognized for training or experience but is not tested or certified. This is not a path for advanced certification levels.

Certified Registered Locksmith (CRL)

The first level of locksmith certification is Certified Registered Locksmith (CRL). A Certified Registered Locksmith has passed the ten mandatory categories, as well as at least two specialized electives of his choice. A CRL has a good working knowledge of general locksmithing.

Certified Professional Locksmith (CPL)

The second level of locksmith certification is Certified Professional Locksmith (CPL). A Certified Professional Locksmith has earned the CRL designation and has successfully in an additional twelve elective categories. A CPL has an advanced knowledge of general locksmithing and of many specialized areas.

Certified Master Locksmith (CML)

The highest level of locksmith certification is Certified Master Locksmith (CML). A Certified Master Locksmith has reached the highest level of ALOA's Proficiency Registration Program and has successfully demonstrated proficiency in ninety percent of the available categories of the Proficiency Registration Program. A CML has advanced knowledge of most areas of locksmithing and electronic security.

Certified Professional Safe Technician (CPS)

The first level of the SafeTech certification is Certified Professional Safe Technician (CPS) – A CPS has successfully demonstrated proficiency in 17 safe and vault related categories.

Certified Master Safe Technician (CMST)

The highest level of the SafeTech certification Certified Master Safe Technician (CMST) – A CMST has successfully demonstrated advanced proficiency in safe and vault related categories.

Locksmith Certification Categories

The Proficiency Registration Evaluation currently consists of thirty-six categories, ten of which are mandatory.

The mandatory categories for ALOA Locksmith Certification are:

Codes and Code Equipment	Cylinder Servicing
Key Blank Identification	Key Duplication
Key Impressioning	Professional Lock Opening Techniques
Lockset Functions	Lockset Servicing
Basic Master Keying	Cabinet, Furniture and Mailbox Locks

The remaining twenty-six categories are electives that may be selected according to each locksmith's field of specialization or expanding knowledge. This number will vary as technology changes. Each elective contains between twenty-five and forty questions, depending on the subject covered.

The elective categories are:

Domestic Automotive	Foreign Automotive	Door Closers
Life Safety Codes	High-Security Cylinder Servicing	Special Application Cylinder Servicing;
Tubular Key Cylinder Servicing	Basic Electricity	Exit Hardware and Exit Alarms
Keyless Mechanical Locks	Lever Tumbler/Non-Safe Deposit Locks	Motorcycle Locks
Safe Combination Locks	Safe Deposit Locks	Time Locks
Lockset Installation	Advanced Master Keying	Safe Installation
Safe Opening and Servicing	Vault Installation & Servicing	Small Format Interchangeable Core
Large Format Interchangeable Core	Electromechanical Access Control	Related Door Hardware
Alarms	Detention Locking Systems	

Safe Technician Certification Categories

CPS categories:

Lock Identification	UL Standards for Safes	Vaults and Safe Locks
SMNA & JIS Ratings	Tools and Their Usage	Safe Lock Servicing and Changing For Common US Made Locks
Troubleshooting and Dialing Diagnostics	Theory of Manipulation	Safe Lock Installation
Basic Safe and Lock Construction	Safe Installation	GSA Equipment
Safe and Vault Door Adjustments/Alignment	Drilling, Post-Penetration Repairs	Safe Deposit Locks

Key-Operated Safe Locks	Safe-Related Electronics	
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CMST categories:

Lock Identification	UL Standards for Safes, Vaults and Safe Locks	SMNA & JIS Ratings
Tools and Their Usage	Safe Lock Servicing and Changing For Common US Made Locks	Troubleshooting and Dialing Diagnostics
Theory of Manipulation	Safe Lock Installation	Basic Safe and Lock Construction
Safe Installation	GSA Equipment,	Safe and Vault Door Adjustments/Alignment
Drilling, Post-Penetration Repairs	Safe Deposit Locks	Key-Operated Safe Locks
Safe-Related Electronics	Advanced Dialing Diagnostics, Manipulation	Uncommon Safes and Locks,
Advanced Safe Deposit Locks	Time Locks	Night Depositories,
High-Security Safe Construction	Safe Penetration, Advanced Borescope Techniques	Composite and High-Security Safe Repair
Vaults and Vault Doors		

Duties

A professional trained locksmith installs locks, deadbolts and other locking devices to safeguard homes, businesses, vehicles, and other property. Locksmiths also may modify or repair such devices, rekey locks, make duplicate keys, generate new keys for locks whose keys have been lost and respond to emergency calls to open vehicles, homes, and businesses that have been locked accidentally or have malfunctioned.

When new or replacement locks are required, a locksmith assists the customer in determining the types of locks needed and where they are to be installed. The locksmith installs a lock by cutting or drilling the proper opening in the selected location, using small hand and power tools.

A locksmith may sell and service safes for home and business use. Some locksmiths install and service electronic alarm and surveillance systems and access control systems. Banks have many

locking devices that require regular service by locksmiths such as vault doors, safe deposit boxes and teller equipment.

A locksmith repairs a lock by disassembling and examining it to locate worn or malfunctioning parts, then cleans and adjusts the internal mechanisms and replaces these parts with new ones supplied by the lock's manufacturer. On occasion, it may be necessary to custom make some repair parts using lathes, drills, grinders, and other power and hand tools. When the repairs have been completed, the locksmith will reassemble the lock and check its operation.

A locksmith may respond to emergency calls for customers who have accidentally become locked out of the home, business or vehicle. The locksmith begins by examining the lock(s) to determine the best method to circumvent the lock. These methods may include the use of lock picks, bypass tools or other special instruments. Fitting a key by code or other skilled means is also a method of opening a lock. Experience, skill, and knowledge dictate the method a professional selects to open a lock. There are times when the quality of the lock, concern for the safety of occupants and other factors such as malfunctions of the lock may force the locksmith to use destructive techniques to gain entry. Before performing an opening or certain other sensitive tasks, the locksmith may require a picture ID.

A locksmith makes duplicate keys using a key-duplicating machine. With the customer's (pattern) key and key blank clamped in their respective vises, the locksmith moves the pattern key across the guide. A rotary cutter cuts the same pattern into the key blank. The locksmith carefully examines the new key to ensure its accuracy.

For security reasons or because keys are stolen or misplaced, many businesses, hotels/motels, and apartment complex owners contract with locksmiths to provide new master key systems, reset combinations and rekey their door locks on a regular basis. Some locksmiths install and service electronic alarm and surveillance systems, including burglar alarms and access control systems. Self-employed locksmiths also must keep business records, maintain a proper inventory of parts, keys, and tools, and schedule their workload.

Working Conditions

Working conditions of locksmiths depend upon the location of the locks and security systems being installed, serviced or repaired. Their repair shops generally are clean, well-lit and adequately supplied with tools, parts, and equipment. While working in repair shops, locksmiths stand or sit at counters, workbenches or desks. Most locksmiths offer on-site repairs installations and conditions at these locations vary greatly. Work on doors, safes and other lockable equipment often require considerable bending. Some strenuous effort may be necessary when working on safes or bank vaults.

Personal Qualifications

Locksmithing involves precise and detailed work. If you are planning on entering the trade, you should possess the mechanical and mathematical ability, good vision, spatial perception, eye-hand coordination and manual dexterity. The ability to understand lock and key specifications, operating manuals and other written or oral instructions is necessary. To install time locks, alarms, access control systems or surveillance devices, locksmiths must have knowledge of electricity and electronics. You also should be able to work without close supervision. Additional traits include

patience, emotional stability, honesty, dependability, accuracy and the ability to get along with other individuals.

Earning and Hours

Earnings of locksmiths depend on their skills and experience, the geographic location of employment, and whether they are self-employed or work for an employer. Beginning salaries range from about \$230 to \$280 a week. Earnings for the different levels of certification will, of course, vary based on many factors such as geographical/economical location, type of work and whether they are self-employed or work for a retail or institutional employer. CRL's may earn from @280 - \$360 per week, CPL's may earn from \$320 - \$440 per week and CML's may earn \$400 - \$720 per week or even higher. Most employers schedule locksmiths to work a 40-hour week, with overtime for emergencies at night or weekends.

Education and Training

During high school, courses in mathematics, mechanical drawing, metalworking, basic electronics, physics, and English plus some business education are recommended. On-the-job training is the primary method of learning locksmithing skills. Trainees will work with experienced locksmiths until they have mastered the necessary skills. In some on-the-job training programs, employees attend demonstrations or receive classroom as well as practical training. The length of time necessary to complete on-the-job training as an apprentice ranges from three months to four years.

There also is an [ALOA Class Schedule](#) that shows what classes are presented at various sites around the country. The ALOA Training Center in Dallas, Texas provides a [Six-Day Basic Locksmithing Course](#) which is comprehensive, hands-on training in basic locksmith skills. The ALOA Convention and Security Expo provides extensive training in a wide variety of locksmith subjects. In the [ALOA Store](#) is a selection of educational books, CD's and videotapes for purchase. **ALOA members** can check out education tapes from the ALOA video library.

ALOA offers a broad array of affordable training programs to keep locksmiths/security professionals abreast of industry changes. Programs include the annual conference, the ALOA Training Center, regional ACE classes, self- study [DVD courses](#) in the ALOA Store and more. Our programs will give you ideas of the most innovative resources, insights and lessons to revitalize your skills and career. Programs, designed specifically for locksmiths/security professionals, consider every stage of your career and provide excellent networking opportunities through a broad range of courses with top-rate faculty.

Conferences

ALOA's [annual conferences](#) attract more than 3,000 security professionals annually from around the world. Each conference is comprised of over 70 eight hour classes with hands-on training, 35 three hour workshops and six evening seminars on a wide range of topics. The ALOA Continuing Education (ACE) department reviews all of the submitted proposals and determines which proposals are accepted into the final program for each conference. For information on presenting at one of these conferences, contact education@aloa.org.

Classroom Programs

ALOA offers more than 140 Industry Specific classes annually to help you grow professionally and increase your personal knowledge of security practices. Classroom programs for the Fall Courses of 2016 range from one to six days and are available at the [ALOA Training Center](#) in Dallas, Texas and throughout the United States, Canada, Asia, Mexico and Europe.

PRP Certified Classes

ALOA offers PRP certified classes that allow the student the opportunity to review the subject matter in a classroom environment for a specific PRP elective category and gives the student the opportunity to take the elective exam upon completion of the class. These classes enable those planning to take the industry certification exams; Certified Registered Locksmith (CRL), Certified Professional Locksmith (CPL) and Certified Master Locksmith (CML), a unique opportunity to review their experience and knowledge and prepare a study plan for the certification exam.

Faculty

ALOA Faculty consists of known experts in the field, with numerous years of industry experience. All of the instructors have completed the requirements for the ACE Certified Instructor program and are evaluated annually on their performance.

Continuing Education Units

ALOA programs are eligible for continuing education units (CEUs). Ten hours of class participation equals one CEU.

Recertification Credits

ALOA Continuing Education (ACE) classes provide credits for CRL, CPL and CML recertification.

Scholarship Opportunities

The ALOA Scholarship Foundation is an independent, educational, non-profit 501(c)(3), tax-exempt corporation established in 1993 to:

- Encourage and provide for educational services, programs and materials concerning locksmithing and security devices and procedures.
- Develop scholarship and assistance programs for persons interested in pursuing a career in the security and locksmithing field.
- Solicit funds necessary to implement the purposes of the Foundation.
- Perform and do any and all such other acts as are necessary, convenient and proper for the attainment of these objectives.

What are the Scholarships for?

The Associated Locksmiths of America Scholarship Foundation (ASF) can be an important source of educational funding. We support all locksmith efforts to seek education via technical training and business management from all educational providers. Scholarships are not limited to ALOA educational programs. While ALOA does have an impressive history in locksmith training and testing, the independent ALOA Scholarship Foundation encourages locksmiths to apply for funding for any of the following industry related training:

- A full ALOA convention package which includes: four or five full-day classes & lab fees w/lunch, 2 evening seminars, 2 half-day classes, 3 days of exhibits and a dinner banquet ticket.
- A full SAVTA convention package which includes: four full-day classes & lab fees w/lunch, 2 evening seminars, 2 days of exhibits and a dinner banquet ticket.
- Sponsored ALOA Certified Class presentations approved by the Foundation Board.
- Other locksmith training provided by education facilities approved by the Foundation Board.
- Limited Travel & Lodging to the above events may be awarded depending on need and funds available.

Selection Criteria

The ALOA Scholarship Foundation awards scholarships for locksmith education based on several criteria that includes:

- Individual applicants financial needs
- Character
- Aptitude for the skills necessary in locksmithing
- Demonstration of a desire for a career in locksmithing
- Availability to attend the event for which the award is given
- Demonstrated commitment to the locksmith industry
- Letters of recommendation from locksmith industry references.
- Previous Scholarship awards.

[Application forms](#) for Scholarships are available from the ALOA website; in Keynotes magazine; in ALOA booths at local shows and from the ALOA office by request.

Scholarship applications for **ALOA or SAFETECH** must be submitted at least **90 days** prior to the first day of the event for which the scholarship is being requested. Scholarships for **other educational events** must be submitted at least **60 days** prior to the event being requested, in order to be given adequate consideration.

The **ALOA Scholarship Foundation Board of Directors** awards all scholarships 15 days after the event deadline for submission of applications.

In-house and Custom Training

ALOA is able to bring any existing course to your facility. Additionally, custom training can be tailored to your specific needs. For more information, download the form and mail, fax, or email it to education@aloa.org.

Licensing

Many cities and states require locksmiths to be licensed and bonded. You should check with your local state, county or city for any licensing requirements. In many states, in order to obtain their licenses, locksmiths must be fingerprinted and pay a fee.

For more information, click on the link for each of the following states that require locksmith licensing:

<u>Alabama</u>	<u>California</u>	<u>Connecticut</u>	<u>Illinois</u>	<u>Louisiana</u>	<u>Maryland</u>
<u>Nebraska</u>	<u>Nevada</u>	<u>New Jersey</u>	<u>New York</u>	<u>North Carolina</u>	<u>Oklahoma</u>
<u>Oregon</u>	<u>Tennessee</u>	<u>Texas</u>	<u>Virginia</u>		

If you have any additional questions about ALOA or becoming a locksmith, you may call me at the ALOA headquarters 214-819-9733 ext.101.

Thank You,



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ALOA Security Professionals Association

Safe and Vault Technicians Association

International Association of Investigative Locksmiths

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