

REPRODUCED CIRCULAR

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"THE PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR"

Telephone : 792671-9
Fax : 796125/792548
E-mail : moeschre@yahoo.com



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Ministry of Education,
Sport and Culture
Harare Provincial Education Office
P. O. Box CY 1343
Causeway
Zimbabwe

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Regional Directors (including District Education Officers)
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Heads, Government Secondary and Primary Schools
Education Officer, Examination Branch
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SECURITY OF KEYS: SAFES AND STRONG-ROOMS

The circular letter has been issued to emphasise the need for security, at all times, of keys for safes and strong-rooms.

The Accounting Officer has the overall responsibility for the control of all safes and strong-rooms on charge to the Ministry. **This is achieved by maintaining registers showing distinctive numbers, types, makes and locations of all such items wherever they may be.** At least once every year, Supplies Branch will call for these details to be submitted to Head Office.

When a safe or strong-room is provided to an office, school or college in the Harare area, the original key, together with the safe custody receipt is handed over to the Head of Office by Supplies Branch. For those offices, schools and colleges outside the Harare area, first, the original key is sent by registered post to the respective Provincial Office. **Secondly, after the receipt of the original key has been acknowledged, the duplicate key is sent by registered post from the Provincial Office with instructions that arrangements be made for the duplicate key to be lodged either**

with a commercial bank or another government department. Any charges raised by a commercial bank for this service should be debited to the respective Office and Miscellaneous Vote Allocation.

A receipt for the lodgement for the duplicate key must be obtained and this must be kept in a safe place, preferably one which is fire proof, but never in the safe or strong-room to which the receipt relates.

The Head of Office may delegate, in writing, to a responsible officer the custody of the original key of the safe or strong-room. In terms of Treasury Instructions, the officer to whom the custody of the safe or strong-room key has been delegated, shall, at all times, carry such key on his person. If this should prove to be impracticable or unsafe at any time, the key should be placed in a labelled and sealed envelope in an alternative safe or strong-room which is under the charge of another officer and a receipt obtained from the other officer. **Under no circumstances should a safe or strong-room key be handed over from one person to another without a written hand-over/take-over certificate even for short periods of time.**

If the original safe or strong-room key is lost, the following action must be taken:

1. **The loss must be reported immediately by telephone to Supplies Branch, Head Office.**
2. **The loss must also be reported immediately to the Police.**
3. The duplicate key must be obtained from the custodian so that the contents of the safe can be checked and removed from the safe or strong-room.
4. The use of the safe or strong-room must be discontinued until after the lock has been changed.
5. The head of office must issue an inter-departmental requisition (**Form 60570-1**) to the local depot of the Ministry of Construction and National Housing to change the lock and supply two new keys. On the requisition, the section headed '**To be charged to**' must be completed '**cost recoverable**'.
6. Written confirmation, to the effect that the above action was taken, together with the name of the person deemed responsible for the loss of the key, must be forwarded to Head Office for consideration by the Accounting Officer.

Unless the Accounting Officer directs otherwise **the cost of altering the lock and cutting new keys shall be borne by the officer responsible for them.**

In the case of damage to the safe or strong-room as a result of an attempted or successful burglary, fire or vandalism, the procedure laid down in Supplies Branch Circular Minute No. 8 of 1981, dated 22 June 1981, should be followed.

Requests to the Supplies Branch for the release of duplicate keys by those offices, schools and colleges in the Harare area, will not be acceded to unless accompanied by the safe custody receipt and a statement in writing of the reasons for the request. In the case of offices, schools and colleges outside the Harare area, requests to the respective custodian for the release of duplicate keys should be made only by the Head of Office.

Any department or institution taking occupation of leased premises containing strong-rooms or built-in safes must request Supplies Branch to arrange for the wards of the locks to be changed before they are taken into use for government purposes. In the event of a department or institution vacating leased accommodation which contains strong-rooms or built-in safes, suitable arrangements should be made to ensure that all keys relating to these items are handed over to the Ministry of Construction and National Housing.

J.C. Gumiro
FOR: SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

