

# KEY TIPS

For Hardware Professionals

October 2005

## Common Causes of Mis-Cut Keys

**Proper Alignment:** The goal you are after is to have the key machine cutting wheel touch the key blank at exactly the same spot the key machine guide is touching the customer's sample key. That simple statement is the key to proper alignment.

A simple little test for proper alignment that can save many key blanks from the "scrap bucket" is to place two of the same type of key blanks in the jaws and gently move them close to the cutter and guide while the machine is still turned off. When the guide touches one key blank, turn the cutter wheel by hand and listen for it to lightly scrape against the other key blank. This test will point out when there is a problem.

**Sharp Cutter:** A sharp cutting wheel helps keep mis-cuts to a minimum. When the cutting wheel begins to get dull, it will require more pressure and time to duplicate a key. The sound of the cutter will become more unpleasant as it becomes duller. Most importantly, the cutter will begin to tear its way through the key blank instead of cutting its way through, thus creating mis-cuts. A sharp cutter will cleanly duplicate a key.

**Clean Key Machine Vise Jaws:** Clean is important because a stray chip of brass or two from the previous key cutting can create that dreaded mis-cut key. A small paintbrush kept near the key machine can be used to brush aside the brass chips in the vise.

**Selecting the Correct Key Blank:** This is essential for creating a duplicate key that operates to your customer's satisfaction. Ilco provides a number of reference publications to assist you in proper key selection. When identification is made, the final test is to place the customer's key flat against the proposed key blank

and compare them. Differences in the bow are not as important as differences in the blade, in the shape, height or length. If the key blank seems thicker than the key, keep looking. Also comparing the runouts of your customer's key to the runouts on the key blank you wish to use is an easy method of confirming the suitability of the key blank. The runouts are the grooved areas nearest the head (or bow of the key)

**Proper Vise Settings:** Depending on the model of key machine you use, there are different specifics to watch for. On models with reversible key vises, or four way key vises, make sure that both vises are sitting at the same point. Having one vise set to normal and one set to reverse is a sure way to produce some mis-cut keys.

Always slide the key back and forth, just a little, across the bottom of the key vise before tightening the jaws. If there is foreign material sitting under the key, such as brass chips, this will allow you to feel it before clamping the key. You will also be able to feel if the key is slightly tilted. It is important that the blade of the key sit flat in the key vise. It does not take much of a tilt, either way, to make the key inaccurate. A tilted original key will provide a false shape to transfer to the key blank. Tilting the original one way and the key blank the other can result in a mis-cut. Sometimes tilted keys occur from leaving them on a key ring, especially a key ring with many keys on it. The weight of the key ring may tilt the key you are trying to duplicate. If the ring is heavy, it is best to remove your sample key from the key ring before placing it in the key machine.

Do not become too enthusiastic when closing the jaws of the key vises. A lot of

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# Q&A

**Q) We would like to promote key duplication several times during the year. Can you offer us some promotional ideas?**

A) A number of stores have told us about their successful key promotions. The following ideas are a great way to promote keys and draw traffic to your store.

## *Hint for the Holidays*

*Some of our painted keys are available carded. Place a sticker on the card that says, "Bring this key back to (insert your store name) to be duplicated FREE". Stuff a stocking with carded items like these keys and key tools and place near the register for impulse sales. Not only will you get an impulse sale, you will be inviting return sales.*

## *Charity Key Tree*

*Decorate a small tree with painted keys and promote that a % of these key sales will be going to the charity of your choice.*

*You could run the charity key promotion throughout the year to show community support or provide funds to benefit local charities. Ideas include: Collegiate Keys to support the Alumni Association, "Critter" Keys to support the Humane Society, US Flag Keys to support the Salvation Army, Red Cross or homeless, offer Military Keys to support veterans, etc.*

## *Buy One Get One Free*

*Advertise a "buy one get one free" key special. Offer a free key with the purchase of a painted key. Make that free key an "Ilco Personalized Key" (made with your store name and phone number) to get your store name for added promotional benefit. Promote the carded Team key as described above, and offer the free Personalized key to maximize key sales during the holidays.*

## *Free Key with Purchase*

*Offer a free duplicate Key with the purchase of a lockset. When advertising your capability to provide Transponder Security Keys, offer a free residential key with purchase. The free key should be a key personalized with your store name.*

These are just a few ideas that can help you to promote or maybe spark some additional ideas on promoting your key duplication business.

Have a question or a subject that you would like to see in Keytips?

Send your questions and/or subjects to:

*Kaba Ilco Corp.  
Attention: KeyTips Staff  
PO Box 2627  
Rocky Mount, NC 27802-2627  
e-mail: info@irm.kaba.com*

Please address the e-mail to the attention of the KeyTips Staff to insure prompt attention.

## **Lock Servicing Classes**

Interested in attending a "hands-on" seminar?

Steve Spiwak instructs our FREE seminars. Steve is a professional instructor with over 40 years of experience in physical security. He has been instrumental in bringing lock-servicing & key duplication training to the retail hardware stores.

If you are interested in attending or holding a training event in your area, contact us at:

*Kaba Ilco Corp.  
Attention: Retail Hardware  
Education Program  
PO Box 2627  
Rocky Mount, NC 27802-2627  
e-mail: info@irm.kaba.com*

Please address the e-mail to the attention of the Retail Hardware Education Program to insure a prompt response.

Visit our Web Site at:

[www.Kaba-ilco.com](http://www.Kaba-ilco.com)

Ilco products & support/reference materials are located under the heading Key Systems-Ilco. We are still developing and growing this site and we welcome your comments and feedback.

# New Products

## Key Tools...Keep Them Handy!

The Ilco Key Tool is a versatile, handy tool. It is shaped like a key, but it's a combination bottle opener, tab can opener and flat head screwdriver. Made of steel, these handy tools are decorated using the same, patented process as genuine Ilco "painted" keys.

Key Tools are also available in an assortment with "clip strip". Display these at the check out and on end caps to maximize your add on sales. (order KTASST).



KTDAD



KTMOM



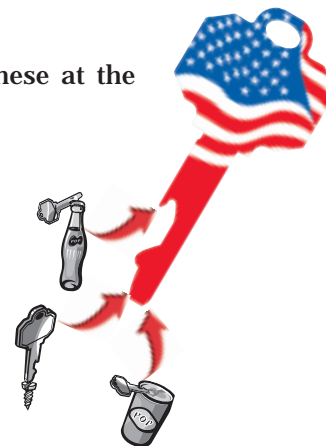
KTPR



KTUS



KTYR



## Photographic Quality, Critter Keys

Photographic, life-like animal pictures are reproduced on large bow keys. The five new designs are a great addition to the painted key line. Beautifully detailed and a sure winner for anyone that has a love of the animal kingdom.

Available to fit Kwikset/ Titan and Schlage. Available open stock or Packaged 2 each in a poly bag of 10.



KW1CAT  
SC1CAT



KW1DOG  
SC1DOG



KW1FISH  
SC1FISH



KW1FROG  
SC1FROG



KW1HORSE  
SC1HORSE

Assorted - (2 ea. of the five patterns)

KW1CRITTERS  
SC1CRITTERS

### Common Causes ... Miscut Keys Continued from page 1

pressure can be generated by the leverage of these jaws. The jaws must hold the key and key blank firmly so that they do not move during the cutting process. If you're having trouble keeping keys secure, it may be that you need to replace the vise assembly.

**Proper Alignment of Key and Key Blank:** Never take a shortcut to align the key and key blank into the vises. Just shoving them against the edge of the key vises will not guarantee a proper cut.

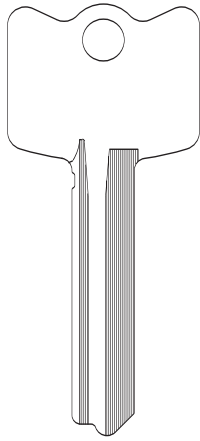
You should always use the top shoulder of the key because this is where the key is indexed from when it enters the lock. If there isn't a shoulder, then there will be a tip stop or the very tip of the key to measure from, and you should align it from there. Review your key machine instruction manuals to insure proper alignment

**Deburring brushes** Dull cutters will leave burrs that must be removed. Even some types of sharp cutters can leave surfaces that need to be brushed. Do not, however, get too enthusiastic

with the deburring brush. The deburring brush cleans the key, so all it needs is a quick once over, not more.

After taking both keys from the key machine, place them flat against each other and compare them. If they are so alike you can't tell which is the original and which is your duplicate, then you will probably have a happy customer. Any differences in the critical areas of the key should be easy to see while they are side by side.

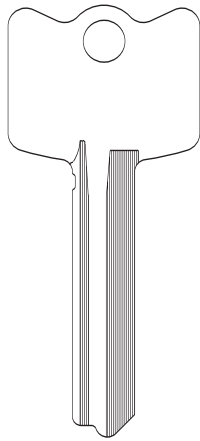
# Key News



**CH1C**

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Arrow Removable Core  
"1C" section



**CH1D**

—

Arrow Removable Core  
"1D" section



**1639**

LD1

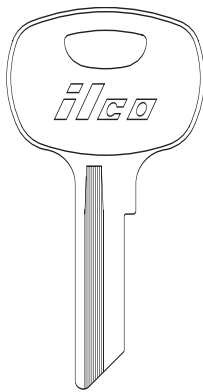
Larson Doors Key



**1640**

LD2

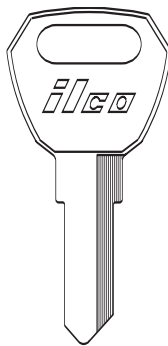
Larson Doors Key



**1641**

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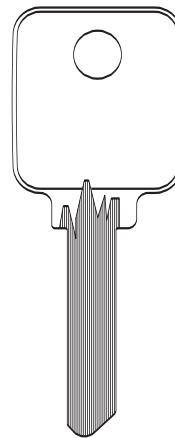
Caterpillar Key



**1645**

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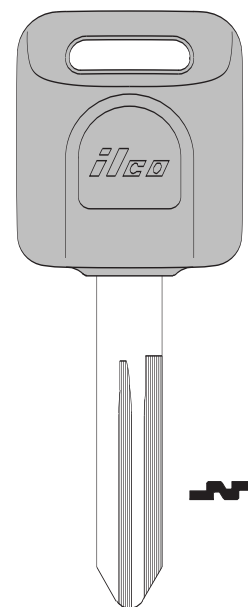
Fulton Hitch



**1644**

—

5 pin Medeco® Biaxial  
(G8)



**NI04T**

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Several Nissan and  
Infiniti Models

Ilco No.:

EZ No.:

Used On:

Ilco No.:

EZ No.:

Used On: