

GUIDELINES FOR ACCESSIBLE LIBERTY SWING KEY MANAGEMENT

In New South Wales, Australia, people with disabilities access public amenities with an MLA key, that is, a special key which can only be made or copied by a Master Locksmith. The Liberty Swing is locked with the same key. This ensures swing security when not in use. The key is used to access the safety belt compartment, the gate (optional) and, importantly, to release the ramp for the swing to become operational.

When a swing is sold, the purchaser receives two of these keys which are easily reproduced by a Master Locksmith for the municipality to distribute. Overseas purchasers should consider additional key purchase at time of order, to eliminate postage costs later.

This distribution, which can bear heavily on the ultimate success of your Liberty Swing installation, is handled very differently across Australia. Here are some guidelines in demonstrated best practice to assist you:

- Ideally, special schools and individual families will have their own key to use at their leisure at any Liberty Swing location (around the world!) and many Councils supply keys at no cost on presentation of proof of residency. This is our preferred option as it encourages maximum use of the swing at a time that suits individuals. We receive many emails from families requesting a list of locations when they are about to go on holidays. Sometimes, they just like to visit a different location near home. Having their own key provides independence and accessibility.
- Some Councils place a sign on the fence advising the public where the nearest key can be collected to access the swing. This may be a kiosk or shop located nearby, which works quite well, but the swing user is limited by the opening hours of the facility. This does not suit families using the swing during summer evenings, or days, for instance, when the facility is closed.
- Some keys are located a distance away, accessible only by car. Some carers and families do not find this out until they have unloaded the car or van to enjoy their day at the park, so then having to drive to another location for a key is cumbersome. **By far this system receives the most negative feedback, and these installations often don't receive the maximum usage that would occur if another system was in place.**
- For municipalities that don't have a shop or kiosk nearby, the best option is to encourage the community to have their own key. This could be through communication with disability groups or special schools via newsletters, newspaper advertisements etc. The Mayor of Nancy, France, has just written to every family in that municipality that has a family member with a disability, to tell them about the new Liberty Swing and offer them a key.
- When distributing keys, please provide adequate information about the user's responsibility for ensuring the swing ramp is left in a locked position.

Examples of a Conditions of Use form are available by contacting Liberty Swing Pty Ltd.

- Please ensure that if the gate is to be locked, that it is keyed-alike with the swing.

For further information or feedback, contact Robert Devine on 02 9580 7063 or sales@libertyswing.com.au or check out our website at www.libertyswing.com.au. See also the comments below in support of ensuring easy key accessibility.

“Visitors find it hard to access the Liberty Swing simply because it’s an effort to locate an access key. Signage directing users to kiosks, information booths or other services to do so, are major usage deterrents. Even for those local residents wanting to access the amenity, spontaneous trips to the park are ruled out. A fun activity becomes a chore, and again just one more thing a tired carer or user has to do in order to enjoy an outdoor public amenity, that those without special needs do not need to worry about”. Debra Carrington, Whitsunday Regional Council.

A good reason for users having their own key!