WHITE PAPER

The Most Common Reasons Americans Call Locksmiths

A nationwide analysis of nearly 58,000 locksmith service calls, revealing what actually brings Americans to a locksmith — and where the pattern breaks down.

KeyMe Locksmiths Research
Nationwide Locksmith Dispatch Data | 2-Year Job Category Analysis

Executive Summary

KeyMe Locksmiths analyzed nearly 58,000 locksmith service jobs dispatched over a two-year period, across all 50 states and Washington, D.C., to identify the most common reasons Americans call a locksmith. Each job was classified into one of five categories: Vehicle Lockout, Residential, Vehicle Booking, Commercial, or Other.

The result is one of the more lopsided findings in this research series: the overwhelming majority of locksmith calls nationwide are for a single reason — someone locked out of their car. That pattern holds with remarkable consistency across most of the country, with one striking regional exception that flips the script entirely.

57,703	89.0%	63.0%	51
Locksmith service calls analyzed nationwide	Share of all calls nationwide for Vehicle Lockout	Share of New Jersey's calls that are Residential, not auto	States and D.C. represented in the data

Key Findings

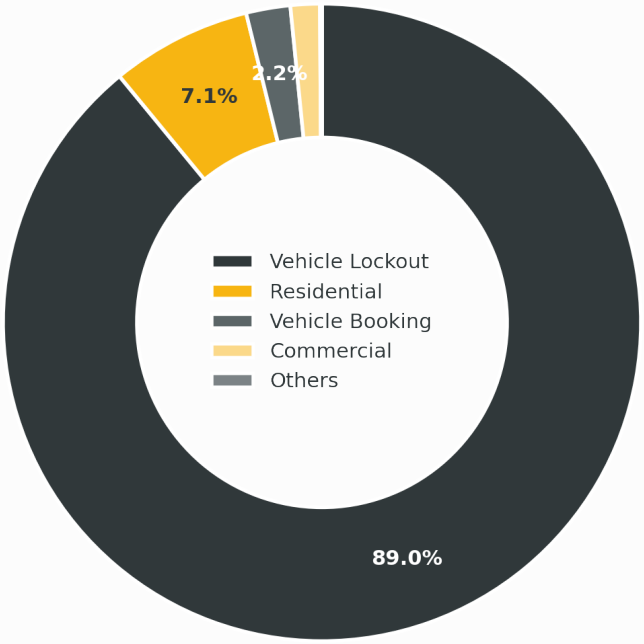
- **Vehicle Lockout is, by a wide margin, the single most common reason Americans call a locksmith,** accounting for 89.0% of all service calls nationwide — more than eight times every other category combined.
- **Residential calls rank a distant second nationally at just 7.1%**, followed by Vehicle Booking (2.2%), Commercial (1.5%), and a small residual Other category (0.1%).
- **Iowa, Minnesota, and Kentucky show the most concentrated Vehicle Lockout demand**, with 98–99.5% of all calls in those states falling into that single category.
- **New Jersey is a dramatic outlier.** Only 23.9% of its calls are Vehicle Lockout — the single-most car-dependent category nationwide — while 63.0% are Residential, by far the highest share of any state.
- **Virginia and Wisconsin are the two highest-volume states overall**, each logging more than 3,600 locksmith calls over the two-year period — ahead of far more populous states like Illinois and Texas.

> *“It's the most basic thing that can go wrong with a car, and it happens to almost everyone eventually. You set your keys down for a second, the door locks, and you're stuck. That single moment accounts for nearly 9 out of every 10 locksmith calls we track nationwide.”*
>
> **KEYME LOCKSMITHS ANALYST**

The Big Picture: One Reason Dominates

Across nearly 58,000 service calls, the breakdown by reason is about as one-sided as data gets. Vehicle Lockout isn't just the top category — it dwarfs every other reason combined, nationwide.

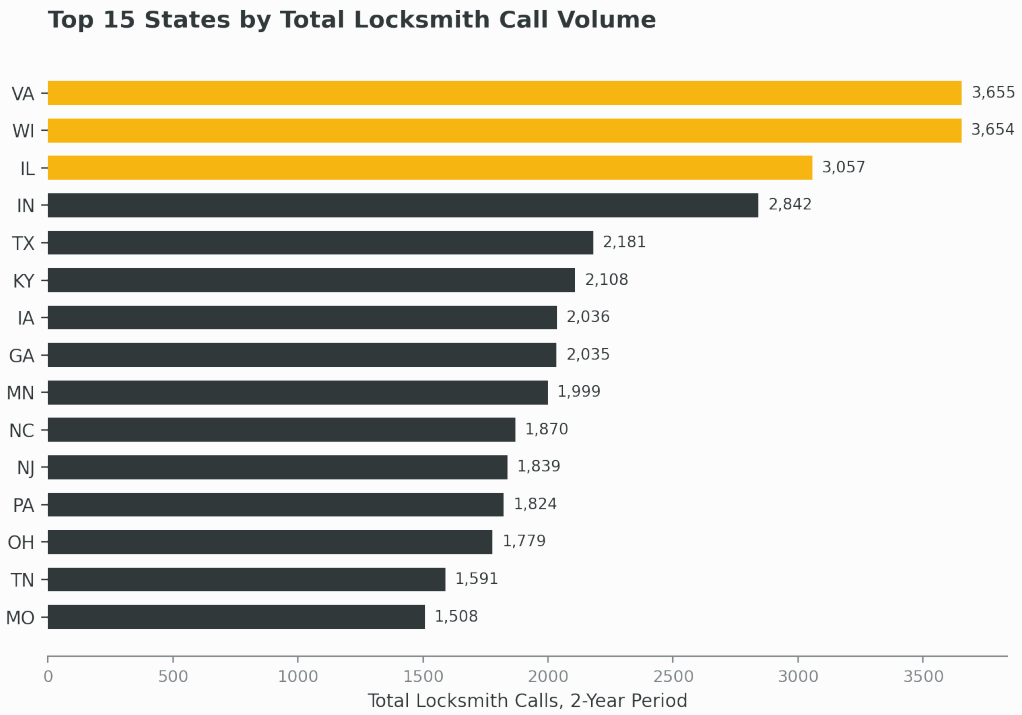
Share of Nationwide Locksmith Calls by Reason



Reason for Call	Total Calls	Share of National Total
Vehicle Lockout	51,384	89.0%
Residential	4,111	7.1%
Vehicle Booking	1,292	2.2%
Commercial	858	1.5%
Others	58	0.1%

Top States by Total Call Volume

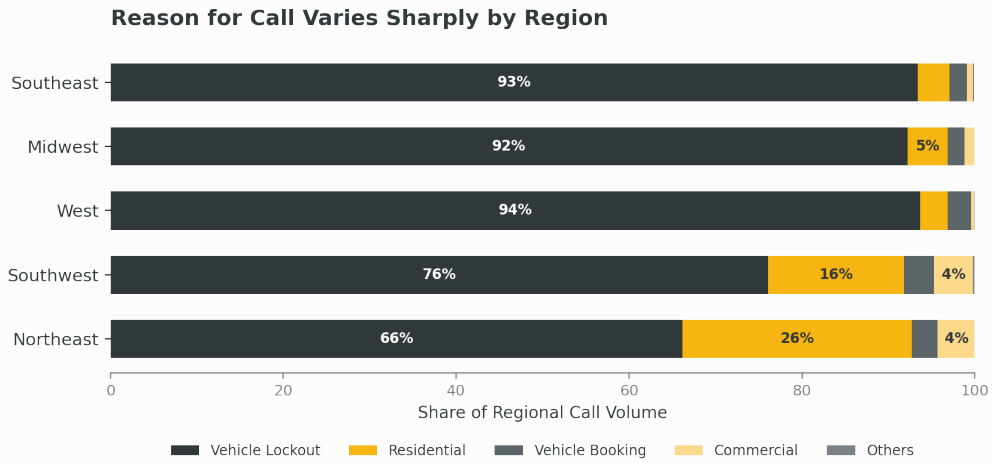
Virginia and Wisconsin lead the nation in total locksmith call volume, each logging more than 3,600 service calls over the two-year period — ahead of considerably larger states like Illinois and Texas. Call volume here reflects service demand as captured through KeyMe Locksmiths' dispatch network, which may not track perfectly with each state's population.



Rank	State	Total Calls	% Vehicle Lockout
1	Virginia	3,655	93.6%
2	Wisconsin	3,654	94.3%
3	Illinois	3,057	76.7%
4	Indiana	2,842	90.1%
5	Texas	2,181	60.1%
6	Kentucky	2,108	98.0%
7	Iowa	2,036	99.5%
8	Georgia	2,035	81.9%
9	Minnesota	1,999	99.0%
10	North Carolina	1,870	96.1%

Regional Analysis: A Consistent Pattern, With One Exception

Grouping states into five regions reveals just how uniform the Vehicle Lockout pattern is almost everywhere — and how sharply the Northeast breaks from it.



West, Southeast & Midwest — 92–94% Vehicle Lockout

AK, AZ, CA, CO, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MI, MN, MO, MT, ND, NE, NV, OH, OR, SD, UT, VA and more

Across the West, Southeast, and Midwest, the pattern barely moves: 92 to 94 percent of every locksmith call is for a Vehicle Lockout, with Residential, Vehicle Booking, and Commercial calls splitting the small remainder. These are car-dependent regions where daily life runs through a vehicle, and the data reflects it almost uniformly from state to state.

Southwest — 76% Vehicle Lockout

AZ, NM, OK, TX

The Southwest softens the pattern slightly, driven almost entirely by Texas, where Residential calls make up more than a quarter of volume. Oklahoma shows a similar tilt toward Residential compared to its neighbors, pulling the region's average down from the 90-plus percent seen elsewhere.

Northeast — 66% Vehicle Lockout

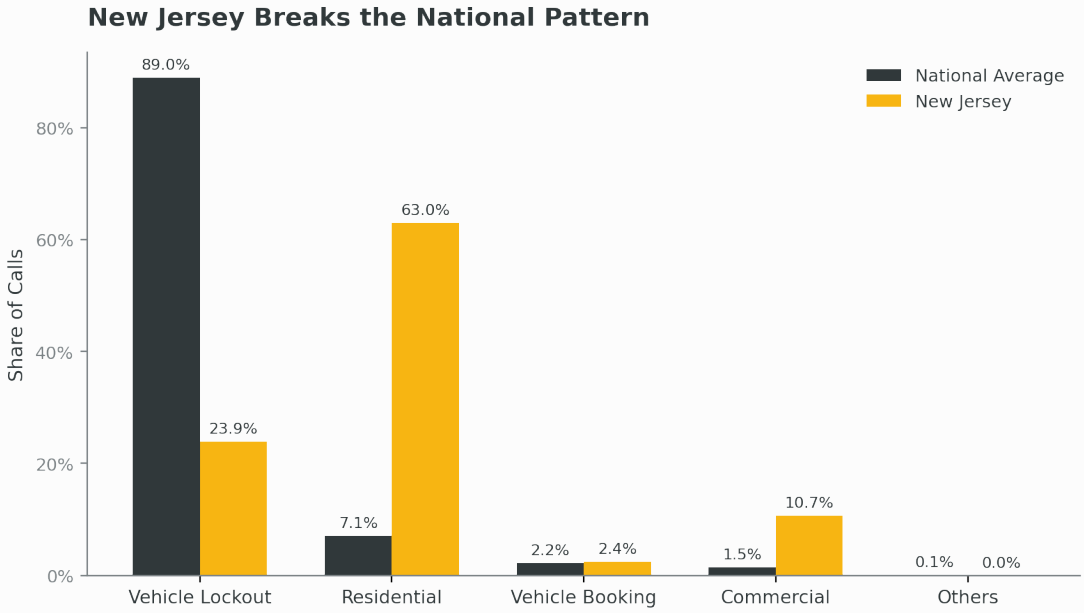
CT, DE, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT

The Northeast is the clear outlier. Vehicle Lockout still leads, but at just 66.2% — more than 25 points below the national average — while Residential calls climb to 26.5% of regional volume, nearly four times the national share. This shift is driven almost entirely by one state.

> *“In states built around driving, the reason for the call almost never changes. Whether it's Iowa, Minnesota, or Kentucky, the story is the same: someone is standing next to their car, keys inside, needing a locksmith. That kind of consistency is rare in this data.”*
>
> **KEYME LOCKSMITHS ANALYST**

The New Jersey Exception

No state in this dataset looks more different from the national pattern than New Jersey. Nationally, 89.0% of locksmith calls are Vehicle Lockouts. In New Jersey, that figure drops to just 23.9% — while Residential calls, which make up only 7.1% of calls nationwide, jump to 63.0% of the state's total. New Jersey also shows the highest Commercial share of any state, at 10.7%.



This isn't a small statistical wobble — it's a fundamentally different call mix. New Jersey is one of the most densely populated, apartment- and rental-heavy states in the country, with a large share of residents living in multi-unit buildings rather than single-family homes with attached garages. That housing pattern likely shifts the everyday lockout risk away from the car and toward the front door.

> *“New Jersey looks like a completely different market than the rest of the country. Nearly two-thirds of its calls are for homes, not cars, which points to a renter- and apartment-heavy market where getting locked out of a front door happens about as often as getting locked out of a car.”*
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> **KEYME LOCKSMITHS PRODUCT LEAD**

Consumer Insights

- **Keep a spare car key somewhere other than your car.** Vehicle Lockout is, by a wide margin, the most common reason Americans call a locksmith — a spare with a family member, at home, or in a secure lockbox can prevent the single most common locksmith call from ever happening.
- **If you live in an apartment or rental, don't assume lockouts are just a car problem.** New Jersey's data shows that in dense, rental-heavy markets, front-door lockouts can rival or exceed car lockouts as the top reason people call a locksmith.
- **Scheduling a spare key in advance (Vehicle Booking) is still rare, but it's the smart move.** Only 2.2% of calls nationwide are proactive bookings rather than emergency lockouts — getting a spare cut before you need one avoids the stress, and often the cost, of an emergency call.
- **Commercial property owners in dense states should budget for lockout support.** New Jersey's Commercial call share (10.7%) is more than seven times the national average, suggesting urban, multi-tenant commercial buildings carry meaningfully higher lockout risk.
- **If you live in a highly car-dependent state, a spare car key is especially worth the investment.** States like Iowa, Minnesota, and Kentucky see 98%+ of all locksmith calls tied to vehicle lockouts, the highest concentration nationwide.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Vehicle Lockout so much more common than every other category combined?

Cars are used daily by most Americans, and a lockout can happen in seconds — a door closing with keys inside, a key left in the ignition, or a dead fob battery. Homes are typically accessed less frequently per day and often have more than one entry point or key holder, which likely keeps Residential call volume lower nationally.

What's the difference between Vehicle Lockout and Vehicle Booking?

Vehicle Lockout calls are reactive: someone is already locked out and needs immediate entry. Vehicle Booking calls are proactive: a customer schedules a spare or replacement key appointment in advance, before an emergency happens.

Why does New Jersey look so different from the rest of the country?

New Jersey's housing stock leans heavily toward apartments, condos, and rental units rather than single-family homes with attached garages. That likely shifts everyday lockout risk toward the front door rather than the car, which shows up clearly in the state's call-category mix.

Are Virginia and Wisconsin really the states with the most locksmith need?

They're the highest-volume states in this dataset, which reflects call volume through KeyMe Locksmiths' dispatch network specifically. That volume is shaped by both underlying demand and service coverage in each state, not population size alone.

Is this data nationwide, or specific to certain markets?

This analysis covers all 50 states and Washington, D.C., over a two-year period, aggregated across KeyMe Locksmiths' national dispatch network.

Methodology

This analysis is based on KeyMe Locksmiths dispatch data covering 57,703 distinct locksmith service jobs completed over a two-year period, across all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Each job was assigned to one of five categories at the time of booking or dispatch: **Vehicle Lockout** (an emergency call for a vehicle a customer is currently locked out of), **Vehicle Booking** (a scheduled, non-emergency appointment for a spare or replacement vehicle key), **Residential** (home lockouts, rekeys, or related services), **Commercial** (business or multi-tenant property lockouts and related services), and **Others** (jobs that did not fit the above categories).

State-level and regional figures reflect the volume and mix of jobs dispatched through KeyMe Locksmiths' network in each location. As with kiosk-based studies in this research series, call volume is shaped by both underlying consumer demand and the density of service coverage in a given state, so state rankings should be read as a reflection of dispatched call volume rather than a precise measure of population-wide locksmith demand.

Regional groupings follow standard U.S. Census-style regional definitions, with minor adjustments for analytical clarity: Northeast (CT, DE, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT), Southeast (AL, AR, DC, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV), Midwest (IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI), Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX), and West (AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY).

Interpretive claims regarding housing density, rental versus homeownership patterns, and regional driving culture are presented as reasonable explanations consistent with the observed data patterns, not as causal findings verified through individual-level customer or housing records.