Walk down almost any commercial strip in Inglewood, Hawthorne or Gardena and you will see the same kind of front door again and again: a narrow aluminum frame around a big pane of glass. These storefront doors are everywhere because they look clean, let in light and show off what is inside. Their locks, though, are a world of their own, and they do not behave like the deadbolt on a house.

If you run a shop, salon or small office behind one of these doors, here is a practical rundown.

How Storefront Locks Differ

Aluminum storefront doors have narrow stiles, the vertical frame pieces on each side of the glass. There is not much room inside for a lock, so storefront doors typically use locks designed specifically for that narrow 1st LS Locksmith Los Angeles space. The key cylinder, the bolt and the way the lock mounts are all different from residential hardware.

That has a few consequences:

- **Not every lock fits.** A standard deadbolt from a hardware store will not install in a narrow aluminum stile.
- **The cylinder can often be serviced separately.** In many storefront setups, the key cylinder is a distinct part, which can make rekeying or swapping cylinders practical.
- **Alignment matters a lot.** Storefront doors are often heavy relative to their frames, and when they sag, the bolt can bind or miss its keeper.
- **Paired doors add complexity.** Many storefronts have double doors, with one fixed and one active, and the hardware has to work together.

Common Problems We Hear About

Shop owners usually call about one of these:

- The key turns hard, or only after jiggling the door.
- The bolt does not fully throw, so the door is not truly locked.
- A staff member left and the front door key needs to change.
- The lock was damaged in a break-in attempt.
- The door drags or does not close fully because of the closer or the pivots.

Each of these needs a slightly different answer. A stiff key on a door that has dropped is often an alignment issue. A staff change is a rekeying question. Break-in damage may require repair or replacement of the lock and a look at the surrounding hardware.

How 1ST L.S. Locksmith Handles Storefront Doors

We treat a storefront door as a whole assembly. The technician looks at the lock, the cylinder, the bolt and keeper, and how the door moves and closes. Then you will hear the options: rekeying the existing cylinder, repairing or adjusting the lock, or replacing it with a compatible storefront lock. You will know the plan and the cost for your front door before the technician starts.

Some storefront issues involve more than hardware. Cracked glass, a bent frame or powered door equipment can require a separate trade, and when that is the case, you will hear it plainly so you can arrange the right help.

On the phone, give us the shop address, say whether it is a single or double glass door, describe what the lock is doing and read off any brand name stamped on it. Photos of the lock and the edge of the door are useful. Let us know your opening hours and the best time for the work.

A Few Habits That Help

- Do not force a stiff key. It can snap off in the cylinder.
- Pay attention when the door starts to drag or needs an extra push to lock. Early attention is easier than a failed lock at closing time.
- Keep a record of who has a key to the front door, and update it with each staff change.

The shop can stay closed while we work, since we work 24 hours, every day of the year. Storefront doors are the face of your business, and their locks deserve someone who knows how they are built. For storefront lock service from a commercial locksmith in Los Angeles, contact 1ST L.S. Locksmith, 1580 Centinela Ave #7, Inglewood, CA 90302, (310) 430-1030, and describe your front door.