



# Could a child open it?

Last week, I discussed locks and keys and their importance to the Hotel Industry. This week, I'm staying on the same track, investigating safes in hotel rooms.

## Back Then<sup>1,2,3</sup>

The first known safe dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC and was found in the tomb of Pharaoh Ramesses II. It was made of wood and used a locking system like the modern pin tumbler lock.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.csguk.com/post/a-history-of-safes#:~:text=In%20the%2018th%20century%20William,began%20a%20production%20of%20safes.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.insafe.com/blog/history-of-safes/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://rsdb.com.my/history-use-of-safe-deposit-boxes/#:~:text=African%2DAmerican%20inventor%20Henry%20Brown,store%20valuable%20items%20and%20documents.>

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, construction and architecture developed fast and led to some interesting innovations. For instance, blacksmiths in southern Germany, Austria, and France started forging safe boxes in iron. These chests later served as models for mass production.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw major improvements such as alarm bells that would ring if someone tried to open a chest (the forbearer to the modern alarm system 😊) and locks that were coded with numbers and letters and could be opened without using a key.

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the United Kingdom pulled ahead of other countries in the production of safes as almost no one had the knowledge or industrial resources to satisfy an increasing demand. The names of William Marr, Cyrus Price, Thomas Milner or Charles Chubb, engineers who laid the foundations for the British Safe Industry, are renown throughout the world.

- Marr designed the first modern-style fireproof safe which had double walls of steel with heat insulation in between.
- Charles and Jeremiah Chubb (two brothers) got a patent for a burglar-resisting safe. I'm sure you bought a Chubb lock or safe at one point or another. I surely did 😊!

Still, it was not until 1917 that safes were given any reasonable test for protection against fire. The results of the first standardized tests proved that many of the old theories about adequate protection were wrong. After that, manufacturers radically changed their construction methods.

## Hotel Room Safes<sup>4,5,6,7,8</sup>

The majority (59%) of guests always use the hotel room safe, 18% keep their valuables on them and 23% may, or not, use it depending on the hotel or the situation.

Is it safe to use it? Maybe yes, maybe no...First, hotel safes are often positioned in places that are obvious for thieves, like a wardrobe or under a table. Second, many hotel employees may have access to your room safe, but the fact that 20% of people use four real easy to guess NIPs (1234, 1111, 0000 or 1212) sure does not help 😊!

## Fun Facts<sup>9,10</sup>

- According to historians, the king of France, Louis XVI, was a master at forging metal and used his knowledge to make locks. But he was particularly proud of an iron box that he had built into a wall and used to store personal documents. This is likely the only case in history of a safe made by a monarch!
- In 2019, a tourist visiting the Vermilion Heritage Museum in Alberta (Canada) succeeded in opening an old hotel safe that no one - including the maker! - had been able to unlock since the 1970s. He put his ear to the safe, used combination 20-40-60 and to everyone's amazement, the safe opened! There were no riches in it though, just an old pay stub and an order book 😊!

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://surelockkey.com/blog/are-hotel-safes-safe-to-use/#:~:text=More%20and%20more%20hotels%20implement,to%20the%20newest%20electronic%20locks.>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thesun.co.uk/travel/18630450/hotel-room-safe-avoid/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://journeyjunket.com/can-hotel-staff-access-the-safe-in-your-room/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.thesun.co.uk/travel/18630450/hotel-room-safe-avoid/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.datagenetics.com/blog/september32012/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://muzeydeneg.ru/eng/?p=683>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.tripadvisor.ca/ShowUserReviews-g60750-d82868-r173412745-Courtyard\\_by\\_Marriott\\_San\\_Diego\\_Downtown-San\\_Diego\\_California.html](https://www.tripadvisor.ca/ShowUserReviews-g60750-d82868-r173412745-Courtyard_by_Marriott_San_Diego_Downtown-San_Diego_California.html)

- Originally, the Courtyard by Marriott (San Diego) was an old bank. Guests can go downstairs and see the safe that was turned into a conference room. Really cool!

Pardon the pun (once again 😊), but if you want to ‘secure’ additional earnings for your staff and offer clients an easy way to tip them electronically, adopt **Tip&Go!** **Tip&Go** may not resolve the labour shortage issue but it will go a long way in reducing it 😊!

**Francis Léonard CEO**



**[www-tip-go.com](http://www-tip-go.com)**