
S.O.P. #: 400-28

SUBJECT: KNOX BOX ENTRY SYSTEM

DIVISION: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

Objective: To establish guidelines for the application of non-destructive entry systems. To ensure strict accountability and security of Knox Box keys to maintain trust and reliability of the Knox Box Entry System. Presently, in Baltimore County only the Knox Box System is in use.

Section 1: Procedure for Procuring a Knox Box System.

A. Administrative duties for obtaining Knox Box System will be handled by the main Fire Marshal's Office:

1. Direct parties interested in obtaining a Knox Box to the Fire Marshal's Office, which will mail out pertinent information.
2. Stations may also contact the Fire Marshal's Office to request informational literature.
3. The Knox Box company will not sell a Knox Box device without an authorized signature from the Fire Marshal's office.

B. Knox Box Installation:

1. Upon the requesting facility's receipt of the Knox Box device, the owner/agent is instructed to contact the main Fire Marshal's Office, which will then contact the first due career company, who will schedule a site visit to assist the owner/agent in suggesting proper placement of the Box.
 - a. Placement guidelines:
 - 1) Discretion of the Company Commander.
 - 2) Consideration should be given to equipment without ladders (medic units, etc.)
 - 3) Recommended height is between 5 and 8 feet above grade.
 - 4) Boxes for residential facilities should be accessible by medic units.
 - 5) Buildings with Knox Box devices should have Knox Box stickers affixed to doors, gates or suppression equipment.
 - b. After installation:
 - 1) The owner/agent is to contact the Fire Marshal's Office and request that the Knox Box be locked. If a station is contacted by the owner/agent, the station can lock the box but then the station must submit a Knox Box Inspection Form to the Main Fire Marshal's Office.
 - 2) Using the Knox Box Tracking Form, when the owner agent receives the Knox Box device, the Fire Marshal's Office will advise the first due career company:

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- a) to expeditiously make arrangements to meet the owner/agent and lock the Knox Box.
 - b) record inventory of keys placed in the Knox Box. Inventory keys placed in the Knox Box, using the Knox Box Inspection Form. The information obtained on the form will be used by the responding career station to update the Knox Box file in the FS-01 system.
 - c) Once keys are secured, the Officer-in-Charge and the owner/agent are to sign the Form. After entering the information in the FS-01 file, the white copy of the Knox Box Inspection Form must be forwarded to the Fire Marshal's Office.
- 3) Forward Knox Box Tracking Form to the main Fire Marshal's Office.

C. Procedure for Placing a Knox Box in-service or out-of-service:

1. The Fire Marshal's Office will send a "Priority" message advising All stations to update their Knox Box location lists. Upon receipt of the Knox Box Inspection Form, the Fire Marshal's Office will send a "Priority" message advising ALL to update their Knox Box location lists. Additionally, the Fire Marshal's Office will send an Interoffice Correspondence to Fire Dispatch so that the new Knox Box will be added to the CAD.

NOTE: All correspondence, sent to the field or fire dispatch, relating to Knox Box installations, must come from the Fire Marshal's Office. Report all new installation and changes regarding Knox Boxes to the Fire Marshal's Office.

D. Emergency Response to Knox Box locations:

1. Company Commander's responsibility to ensure personnel under their command are aware of Knox Boxes in their district.
2. To avoid unnecessary damage to property, due care is to be taken to make full use of the non-destructive entry system.
3. If forced entry is made at a location with a Knox Box, the Company Commander will forward to the Division/Battalion Chief a written report of the events and considerations.

E. Annual Routine Inspections of Knox Boxes are to be Made by First Due Career Companies:

1. Scheduling:
 - a. If facility is field inspected, conduct physical examination at same time, if possible.
 - b. If not under the normal field inspection program, Company Commanders are to schedule.
 - c. Utilize the Knox Box Inspection Form to inventory the keys in the box while performing the routine annual inspection. Use the information gathered on the Knox Box Inspection Form to update the FS-01 Knox Box screen.
 - d. The district Fire Marshal will advise first due companies of any installations or inspections of Knox Boxes at buildings that the field companies do not routinely inspect. Example: hi-rise, industrial buildings, etc.

2. Procedures:

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- a. Activate the box, lock, or gate by the Knox Box key to ensure that the device operates properly.
 - b. If it has an alarm that will trip when the device is activated, notify occupants prior to testing the system.
 - c. Should repairs be required:
 - 1) Verify with tenant that the keys in the box are up-to-date.
 - 2) Responsibility of the owner/occupant.
 - 3) Utilize the Fire Inspection Report to advise of the problem and repair request.
3. Knox Box Systems Identification:
- a. A Knox Box emblem should be displayed at the main entrance and, if needed, at secondary entrances.
 - b. Requests for Knox Box emblems may be made at the main Fire Marshal's Office and will be distributed to companies upon request.
- F. Daily Key Check:
1. Responsibilities of the Officer-in-Charge:
 - a. All Knox Box keys are to be inventoried at change of shifts by the drivers of the apparatus, and noted on the daily DOT form.
 - b. Verify key is stamped with appropriate unit number.
 - c. Any missing keys shall be reported to the Division/Battalion Chief.
 2. All keys and lists shall be maintained and stored in a manner that affords a responsible level of security.
- G. Annual Key Check:
1. Responsibilities of the Division/Battalion Commander:
 - a. Perform annual inventory and submit written report to appropriate Division Chief during the month of September indicating and verifying location of all Knox Box Keys in battalion. (Career and Volunteer)
 - b. Any missing keys will merit full investigation and written report, including a police investigation report. Verify the log book and Knox Box Keys annually during the month of September for all volunteer equipment in battalion and submit written report to the Division Chief of Operations.
 2. It is reminded that lack of accountability of missing keys is a severe breach of responsibility given to station commanders.

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H. The Knox Box devices used in Baltimore County are keyed specifically for the boxes or devices installed in this county. Occasionally, a company may be called to lock a new Knox Box, and may find that their key may not work. This may be caused by the installation of a Box or other device that is not keyed properly. Contact the Fire Marshal's Office should a key not work properly.

I. Key Check for Volunteer Equipment:

1. Knox Box keys will be issued to all Volunteer stations and signed for by the senior Fire-Line Officer.
2. A bi-annual inspection and sign-off will be done.
 - a. The inspections will take place in the months of April and October of each calendar year by the District Representatives.
3. After each inspection is completed, the sign-off sheets from each district will be sent to the Vice-President of Operations. The Vice-President will then forward a copy of the inspection sheets to the Division Chief of Operations.
4. A weekly check-off of the keys will be completed by a company officer that will be registered in a log book, showing the date and name of the officer completing the check.