



# **SAN DIEGO FIRE-RESCUE**

## **COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION**

### **KNOX BOX GUIDELINES**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

These guidelines are intended to familiarize contractors and the public with general information about Knox Boxes.

#### **II. OVERVIEW**

The Knox Program provides San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) with a quick and easy means to access a secured building or area. It also minimizes potential costly repairs caused by forcible entry and allows the building to be re-secured quickly and easily.

#### **III. DEFINITIONS**

**KNOX COMPANY:** The manufacturer/vendor of Knox boxes, cabinets, key switches, padlocks, and related accessories.

**KNOX BOX:** A lock box used for securely storing the keys to a gate, building, or rooms within a building.

**KNOX KEY SWITCH:** An electrical switch activated by a Knox key which opens a gate, garage door, or other electric entry door.

**KEY TAG:** Attached to each key in a Knox box to identify its function.

#### **IV. BACKGROUND**

When access to secured structures or areas is difficult for emergency responders, the Chief is authorized to require a Knox box or key switch to be installed in an acceptable location. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department has had a Knox Program in place for over forty years and cannot access lock boxes or switches manufactured by other companies.



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### **V. INSTALLATION/LOCATION**

It is the customer's responsibility to ensure that Knox products are installed securely in an approved location and manner. Knox boxes may need to be anchored to the building with lag bolts, recessed into plaster or stucco, or welded to metal fences, posts, or gates.

One Fire-Rescue Department reflective alert decal is included with each Knox box. The decal is to be mounted by Fire Department Personnel only. This reflective decal alerts fire companies as to the presence of a Knox box.

Knox boxes are to be installed within 10 feet of the main entrance to the building at a height not to exceed SEVEN (7) FEET ABOVE FINISHED GRADE MEASURED FROM THE TOP OF THE BOX (BUT PREFERABLY AT FIVE (5) FEET). This height has proven to be ideal since it enables fire crews to access the Knox box quickly without the delay of setting up a ladder. Also, seven feet is high enough to discourage the idly curious. Other locations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Knox key switches should be installed by an electrician familiar with these devices. The preferred location for mounting a key switch is at the gate control head, or adjacent to the gate or door entry keypad.

### **VI. KEYS IN KNOX BOXES**

Every key placed in a Knox box shall be identified with a sturdy tag. Each set of keys shall be grouped together on a key ring. The keys being installed will be at the discretion of the customer, but they should be selected bearing in mind the access needs of responding fire companies. Some keys typically placed in Knox boxes include: MAIN ENTRANCE, GRAND MASTER, ELEVATOR CONTROL, MECHANICAL ROOM, FIRE ALARM PANEL, ELECTRICAL ROOM, AND ROOF ACCESS.



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### **VII. LOCK UP OF KNOX BOX**

Knox boxes are shipped to the customer in the OPEN position. After the box has been installed, the customer must contact the Knox Box Coordinator to request a lock-up/final inspection appointment. All keys should be tagged and ready for placement in the Knox box upon arrival for the lock-up/final inspection.

*Note: The customer shall notify the Fire-Rescue Department and provide the new key where a lock is changed or rekeyed. The key to such lock shall be secured in the key box.*

### **VIII. TESTING OF KEY SWITCH**

After a key switch has been installed, the customer must contact the Knox Program Coordinator to request an appointment to ensure that the key switch was installed and working properly. The customer does not need to be present for this test. If the key switch fails to operate, the customer will be contacted to have the necessary repairs made.

### **IX. NUMBER OF KEY SETS REQUIRED**

More than one set of keys is often required, especially in larger buildings. These extra sets are needed for the additional fire companies subsequently arriving at the same address. The following guidelines for number of key sets shall be followed:

1-2 story building:	1 set of keys	3200 Series
3-4 stories:	2 sets	3200 Series
5-8 stories:	3 sets	4400 Series
9 stories and above:	4 sets	4400 Series
Home/Residential	1 set of keys	1600 Series