

**FPB POLICY K-20-2**

**KNOX BOX REQUIREMENTS AND  
PROCEDURE FOR ORDERING  
CFC 506**

**I. PURPOSE**

This policy is intended to provide information about Knox-keyed devices and how to obtain them.

**II. SCOPE**

This policy shall apply to all buildings or sites within the City of San Diego where it has been determined that a Knox-keyed device is needed to improve accessibility for emergency responders.

**III. 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.

**IV. 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.

**V. 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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## **VI. HOW TO ORDER**

Once the need for a Knox box or other Knox product has been established, the customer will be given this policy and a Knox Product Authorization Order Form with price list, a SDFD Knox Product Application Form and ordering instructions. These will be given to the customer by the Knox Program Coordinator. This information can be sent by email upon request or accessed on the SDFD web site.

The customer should review this information and select a model number on the order form. If the customer needs assistance in selecting the appropriate product, he/she may contact the Knox Program Coordinator for assistance. Once the selection has been made, the completed SDFD Knox Product Application Form, the completed Knox Authorization Order Form and a check payable to "The City Treasurer" for a one time City processing and inspection fee shall be submitted to the Knox Program Coordinator for each install address, via US mail, or it can be dropped off at the SDFD receptionist. Once processed and approved, the applicant will receive via email the signed, approved Knox Authorization Order Form and a receipt for the City processing and inspection fee. The approved Knox Authorization Order Form is now ready to send to The Knox Company with your payment and order form. The Knox Company will ship your order directly to the address specified on the order form.

## **VII. 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.

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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.

#### **VIII. 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.

#### **IX. 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.*

#### **X. 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.

#### **XI. 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

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

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