

## Knox-Box® Access

### 706.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide information about the Knox-Box® Rapid Entry System and the roles and responsibilities of District members with regard to Knox-key security, storage, access and accountability. This policy shall apply to all buildings or sites within the Fresno County Fire Protection District jurisdiction where it has been determined that a Knox-keyed device is needed or has been provided for accessibility for emergency responders (Fire Code § 506).

#### 706.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Key tag** - Attached to each key in a Knox-Box to identify its function.

**Knox-Box** - A locked box used for securely storing the keys to a gate, building or rooms within a building.

**Knox cabinet** - A locked data cabinet used for storing information pertinent to the operation of a building, such as hazmat data and plant shut-down procedures. Keys to the facility can also be located within the cabinet.

**Knox Company** - The manufacturer/vendor of the Knox-Box, cabinets, key switches, padlocks and related accessories. This is the only company whose products can be accessed by the Fresno County Fire Protection District.

**Knox master key** - A key carried on all fire apparatus which enables District members to access any Knox-keyed device within the jurisdiction.

**Knox tones** - Electronic tones sent by a dispatcher over the radio to release the Knox master key from the fire apparatus.

### 706.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Fresno County Fire Protection District to be registered with the Knox Company to participate in its rapid entry system, providing safe and secure non-destructive emergency access to commercial and residential properties. Participation minimizes potential budget impacts caused by forcible entry during an emergency and allows a building to be re-secured quickly and easily by members.

The Fire Chief or the authorized designee shall appoint a Knox program coordinator, who shall be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the program are administered in accordance with state fire code, local ordinance and Knox Company requirements.

### 706.3 KNOX KEY ACCOUNTABILITY

A Knox master key will be issued to District Prevention Inspectors, Law Enforcement Officers and Chief Officers. Appropriate fire apparatus may be equipped with locking units that are accessed by an individual pin code or by tones issued via two-way radio by the dispatcher. Once the Knox

## *Knox-Box® Access*

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master key is released, it should be used to access the Knox-keyed device at the location of the emergency and be immediately returned to the secured unit.

Each secured unit may have an audit trail showing all access. Each incident requiring a dispatcher to send tones shall have that activity noted in the incident record.

The Fire Chief is ultimately accountable for Knox master keys issued to the District. Any missing master key shall be immediately reported verbally to a supervisor and followed up with a written explanation to the Fire Chief within two working days.

Maintenance and security of the Knox master keys is essential to the credibility of the program. Any loss of a master key shall be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action initiated. If the key cannot be recovered, all Knox master keys in the jurisdiction may have to be replaced at District expense.

### **706.4 SITE INSTALLATION AND TESTING**

It is a property owner's responsibility to order Knox-keyed devices and ensure that they are installed securely in a manner and location approved by the District, in accordance with local building codes and ordinances. The reflective alert decal included with each Knox-Box should be mounted on the door or door frame adjacent to the Knox-Box. It is intended to alert fire companies to the presence of a Knox-Box.

Knox-Boxes should be installed at the gate or near the main entrance to the building at a height not to exceed 6 feet. This height has proven ideal as it enables members to access the Knox-Box quickly without deploying a ladder, yet is high enough to discourage tampering. The preferred location for mounting a key switch is at the gate control head or adjacent to the gate or door entry key pad.

Knox-key switches should be installed by an electrician familiar with these devices.

### **706.5 KEYS IN KNOX-BOXES**

Every access 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. Tags and key rings may be purchased from the Knox Company at the time the Knox-Box is ordered. The keys being installed will be at the discretion of the property owner but should be selected based on the access needs of emergency responders. Keys typically installed in a Knox-Box include:

- Main entrance
- Grand master
- Elevator control
- Mechanical room
- Fire alarm panel
- Electrical room

## *Knox-Box® Access*

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- Roof access
- Other secured areas deemed appropriate by the owner and/or the District

### **706.6 LOCK UP OF KEYS IN KNOX-BOXES**

Knox-Boxes are shipped to the property owner in the open position. After the box has been installed, the property owner must contact the Fresno County Fire Protection District to request a lock-up of the box. Fire prevention staff will assist the property owner in arranging for a lock-up. All keys should be tagged and ready for placement in the Knox-Box upon the arrival of the prevention staff.

### **706.7 TESTING KEY SWITCHES**

After a key switch has been installed, the property owner must contact the District. The first-in engine company will test the key switch at its earliest convenience to ensure that it works properly. The property owner does not need to be present for the test. If the key switch fails to operate, the property owner will be contacted by the engine company to have the necessary repairs made.

### **706.8 NUMBER OF KEY SETS REQUIRED**

More than one set of keys is often required to be placed in the Knox-Box, especially in larger buildings. The extra sets of keys are needed for additional fire companies or second alarms arriving later at the same incident. The following guidelines have been established for the number of key sets required:

- Security gate only, or one- to two-story building: one set of keys
- Three to four stories: two sets of keys
- Five to eight stories: three sets of keys
- Nine stories and above: four sets of keys