



Division 12 Inspections and Investigations

Chapter 07 – Knox Box Security Systems

February 2009

POLICY

This General Order shall establish a procedure for utilizing the Knox Box security system for selected buildings in Prince George's County.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURES

1. Description

The Knox Box system employs secure, lockable boxes, permanently mounted at selected buildings, which contain keys to the building. These keys can be used to gain access to secure areas, such as utility rooms (water, gas, electric), sprinkler rooms, elevator and other control rooms, and individual apartment units within multi-family dwellings.

By utilizing these keys to gain access to secure areas, Department personnel can significantly reduce the amount of damage and dollar loss to the building in both emergency and non-emergency situations. This is an alternative to traditional forcible entry methods.

Our Department is the only entity with keys to the Knox Boxes, and all Knox Boxes throughout the County are keyed the same. The value of the system is in its simplicity of use. The Department only needs one key to gain access to all equipped buildings. However, the same simplicity can create a major security risk in the event of a lost key.

Therefore, careful attention to the security aspects of this procedure is of the utmost importance.

2. Authority

Approval for initial Knox Box installation can only be granted by the Knox Box Coordinator, upon recommendation of the Battalion Chief. Moreover, additional keys must also be authorized by the Knox Box Coordinator.

3. Target Buildings

- County owned buildings
- Buildings with unique or unusual security features
 - Multi-lock systems
 - Special security needs
- Large commercial occupancies and multifamily dwellings

4. Knox Box Administration

Application Processing

Company officers should ensure that the features of the Knox Box system are explained to the building owner/manager. In addition, officers should provide an application signed by an authorized Departmental representative.

Knox Box system information and applications are available from the division level coordinator, as well as Departmental or Battalion Knox Box Coordinators. The company officer shall assist the applicant in submitting the completed application from



the Division Commander via the Division Knox Box Coordinator.

The Knox Box Coordinator, or his/her designee, shall approve and sign or disapprove the application, and return it to the company officer via the chain-of-command.

If disapproved, the application shall be returned to the building owner. If approved, the application shall be returned to the building owner/manager with instructions to send the approved application, along with remittance to cover the cost of the Knox Box, directly to the Knox Company. In addition, a letter from the Knox Box Coordinator explaining the non-liable status of the Fire/EMS Department shall be given to the building owner/manager upon approval of the application.

Installation

The Knox Box will be sent directly to the building owner and shall be installed in an appropriate location at the owner's expense. Company officers should suggest appropriate locations to the building owners. Once installation is completed, the keys provided by the building owner/manager shall be secured within the Knox Box by the company officer, as soon as possible.

Key Distribution

Keys shall be distributed as follows:

- Engine company- 1 key
- Special service company -1 key per service
- Medic Unit -1 key
- Ambulance – 1 key
- Duty Chief -1 key
- EMS supervisor- 1 key
- Other specified units as prevailing conditions may warrant

Key Security

Career and volunteer station officers are mandated to provide adequate security for all Knox Box master keys. Security is to include a procedure to check and record the presence of all keys on a monthly basis, and to provide immediate notification to Public Safety Communications, the Knox Box Coordinator, and the Prince George's County Police Department in the event that a key is missing.

Loss of Keys

In the event of a lost key, a narrative report shall be sent to the Knox Box Coordinator by the responsible party through the chain-of-command. Should the loss be due to theft, a police report shall also be required and notification shall be made immediately to Knox Box Coordinator. Replacement keys will be provided upon receipt of all completed paperwork.

File Records

Each Battalion is expected to establish a Knox Box Coordinator who will be responsible for all Knox Box activities within the Battalion. Copies of all approved applications shall be retained on file by the Knox Box Coordinator. The Knox Box Coordinator will also be responsible for keeping a list of all keys and their disposition (Attachment 1), as well as a current list of buildings that have Knox Box service (Attachment 2).

All necessary literature will be made available via the Battalion Chief. Each station officer will complete a report specifying the disposition of all Knox Box keys on a monthly basis, and forward the report to their respective Battalion Coordinator. The Battalion Coordinator shall compile the reports from all stations within their



Battalion, and forward the information to the Department Knox Box Coordinator, also on a monthly basis.

Emergency Crews

Career and volunteer station officers shall provide adequate training and supervision to ensure that personnel use installed Knox Box Security Systems to prevent unnecessary damage.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 - Department Knox Box Key Inventory

Attachment #2 - Knox Box Equipped Facilities

Attachment #3 - Battalion Coordinator Monthly Reporting Form

Monthly Summary Report

To: Knox Box Division Coordinator

From: _____

Reporting Month: _____

Total number of keys in Division: _____
Less: Total number lost or stolen: _____
Equals: Revised total number of keys: _____

Stations reporting lost or stolen keys:

(include number of keys by station, date of loss or theft, and Police CCN#)

Stations reporting lost or stolen keys requesting replacement keys:

Stations requesting additional keys (include a brief narrative of request):

