Clark-Cowlitz FIRE RESCUE	Fire Code Standard Key Box Requirements and Installation	
	Date: 2/27/2025	Number: 5-2

PURPOSE

To allow entry during an emergency without doing serious damage to doors and other property. Many emergency responses are to buildings when an alarm is sounding, and it is unknown where or if a fire actually exists. The key box can provide keys so the building can be entered and thoroughly checked and fire protection control panels and equipment (i.e., automatic sprinkler riser) accessed, without causing extensive damage. Rapid access to buildings with fire sprinklers can be shut down by fire personnel. If the building was not damaged during forcible entry, the building can simply be re-locked after the incident.

CODE REFERENCE

Washington State Fire Code (WSFC) Section 506

CODE REQUIREMENT

When access to a structure or area is unduly difficult because of secured openings or where immediate access is necessary for lifesaving, firefighting purposes or fire protection equipment purposes, the Chief is authorized to require a key box be installed in an accessible location. The key box shall be of a type approved by the Chief.

APPROVED PRODUCTS

The Fire Department accepts approved products from the Knox Company. Knox boxes and accessories can be ordered online at https://www.knoxbox.com. On the website, insure you select "Washington" state and the "Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue" fire department. You will then need to pick one of two options:

- Commercial and Residential Boxes
- Gate Access/FDC/Elevator Boxes

After you order the product, the fire department will authorize the purchase (to maintain security of the system). Once you purchase the product, the box will be shipped to your location. After you install the box on your building, contact the Fire Department and we will come to your building to lock your keys into the box.

MASTER KEY

The Fire Department has the only master key to access key boxes. The Department maintains strict security of the key-box keys carried on fire apparatus.

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WHERE REQUIRED

- Gates and fenced areas where access is required for emergency purposes in commercial occupancies, shall have an access system that allows the Fire Department rapid entry.

- Electrically operated gates shall have an approved keyed switch. The gates shall be installed so they release in a power failure.

- Buildings with elevators

- Commercial structures that have monitored or alarmed fire protection systems, such as fire alarm systems, fire sprinkler systems, or other fixed systems shall have a key box.

- Buildings or complexes that contain processes that use significant amounts of hazardous materials shall have an approved data storage cabinet to contain information as required by WSFC Chapter 50.

- A building owner/occupant may install other, non-required, key boxes at their discretion.

LOCATION

The Fire Department shall approve the location and number of key boxes. Typically, the key box shall be placed to the right of the main entrance or near where any fire alarm panel or fire sprinkler control valve is located. They key box shall normally be located at three (3) to five (5) feet above grade. Do not paint or alter the lock box. Place the included notification sticker on the front entrance door, to remind firefighters the building is equipped with a lock box.

Required elevator key boxes shall be located in the elevator lobby or near the elevator equipment room, as long as it is near the elevator on the ground floor and visible to firefighters.

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APPROPRIATE KEYS

The intent of the key box is to provide firefighters with emergency access to **all** areas of the building.

For multi-tenant buildings, building shall be provided with a master key to enter all spaces. Individual tenant spaces may have a sub-master key just for that space.

In order to provide all-access, the following keys shall be assembled and have a key tag, of material able to withstand the elements, affixed to each with the door, room, suite number or use clearly visible (additional keys maybe required):

- Main entry
- Fire control room
- Card access keys
- Mechanical/electrical rooms
- Fire alarm control panel & manual pull stations (if not the same key)
- Locks on sprinkler riser & backflow prevention devices
- Elevator machine room
- Elevator Hoistway door
- Fire Service Elevator keys
- Other keys as required by the fire code official.

The fire department requires two complete sets of keys in the lock box.

LABELING KEYS

Keys shall be labelled with identifiers, indicating the function of the key. IE: Master Key, Fire Riser Room, Electrical Room, etc.

KNOX FIRE DEPARTMENT CONNECTION (FDC) LOCKS

All new or replacement caps on fire department connections shall be Knox FDC Locks. Knox FDC Locks prevent tampering with the fire department connection, thus reducing property owner maintenance and testing costs

MAINTENANCE

The property owner or tenant is responsible for maintenance of the access systems and assuring that the correct keys are placed in the key box. The Fire Department will access the box to update keys at the property owner's request.

CONSENT

The property owner shall give consent for the Fire Department to access they key box during routine fire inspections to assure that the keys in the box are the correct ones.