



## SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY DIVISION

620 South 'E' Street  
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0179  
(909) 386-8400

Standard Number

**A - 4**

Revision Date:  
July 1, 2023

### FIRE PREVENTION STANDARD

### FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ACCESS KEY BOXES

#### **AUTHORITY**

Sections 102.9, 103 and 104.1 of the 2022 California Fire Code (CFC) and Sections 4 and 8 of Ordinance 23-01 of the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District Fire Code (Fire Code) state that the Fire Code Official of the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District (SBCFPD) shall have the authority to adopt policies, procedures, rules, and regulations in order to clarify the application of the Fire Code and to determine requirements not specifically provided for by the Fire Code. For further requirements on this subject, see sections 506 of the 2022 California Fire Code. This Standard may be modified with the approval of the Fire Code Official.

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Standard is to provide guidance for the approved methods of installation and maintenance of fire personnel access key boxes for buildings within the scope of this Standard.

#### **SCOPE**

This Standard shall apply to all fire personnel access key boxes on all new and existing residential, commercial, and industrial developments and structures as determined by the Fire Code Official using the criteria set forth in this Standard.

#### **DISCLAIMER**

*These Standards may change without notice. Whenever applicable statutes, regulations and Standards are updated and adopted, the latest shall apply. Please contact the Community Safety Division at (909) 386-8400 to determine if these Standards have changed. These requirements do not exempt any individual from complying with other applicable state, county, or city codes and Standards.*

#### **SUBMITTALS**

- 1) All orders shall be made online through the Knox Company website, [www.knoxbox.com](http://www.knoxbox.com). The Fire Code Official shall approve the installation of all key box devices.

**NOTE:** If the project is in the City of Fontana please contact (909) 428-8890 for submittal information.

- 2) When requested by the Fire Code Official, additional information shall be submitted by the applicant and shall contain the following information:
  - a) Plot plan on minimum 8 ½" x 11" size paper, showing the locations of all buildings, fire apparatus access roads, and all fire department key boxes.

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**DEFINITIONS**

**KEY BOX** - An approved secure device with a lock operable only by a SBCFPD controlled key, and containing building entry keys and other keys, devices, or information that may be required in order to allow emergency responders easier access to a building or premises. For the purposes of this Standard, the terms "key box" and "Knox® box" mean the same thing.

**GENERAL**

- 1) Key boxes shall be ordered and purchased by the owner, contractor, developer or other responsible party only from the approved vendor, the Knox® Company.
- 2) All buildings or portions of buildings newly constructed that are protected with either an automatic fire sprinkler system, a fire alarm system, or both, shall have at least one (1) key box installed on the exterior of the building.
- 3) Key boxes shall be of a secure design and of a recessed mounted type with a hinged door, unless otherwise approved by the Fire Code Official for a retrofit installation.
- 4) Key boxes shall be installed a minimum of six feet (6') and a maximum of seven feet (7') above adjacent finished grade and within a maximum of ten feet (10') of the main entrance door or as approved by the Fire Code Official. **(See Diagram A-4.1)**
- 5) Key boxes shall be sized large enough to contain all keys, electronic access cards, or other entry devices or information as required by the Fire Code Official that will enable access to all necessary areas and rooms within the facility. See "CONTENTS" section below.
- 6) Key boxes shall not be installed on gates or used in applications other than buildings without specific approval of the Fire Code Official. For installation of Knox® locks on gates, see SBCFPD Standard A-3.

**CONTENTS**

- 1) A minimum of one (1) key, as required by the Fire Code Official shall be provided for the following areas:
  - a) Locked doors at all points of entry to buildings and non-restricted areas, suites/offices, as required by the Fire Code Official.
  - b) Locked electrical, mechanical, and other similar rooms.
  - c) Locked fire control rooms or rooms containing fire sprinkler risers.
  - d) Locked Fire Alarm Control Panels (FACP's).
  - e) All elevator control systems, panels, and/or keyed firefighter recall switches.
  - f) Any other area, room, equipment, and/or system as directed by the Fire Code Official.



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- g) If approved by the Fire Code Official, magnetic cards or other access devices may be provided.
- 2) In buildings that are larger than one-hundred thousand (100,000) square feet or greater than three (3) stories in height, multiple sets of master keys shall be provided as required by the Fire Code Official. All keys and cards in key boxes shall be permanently labeled indicating the area that it provides access to.
- 3) When possible, and in particular for any multi-family or multi-tenant building, master keys and magnetic cards shall be provided in order to minimize the number of different access devices in key boxes.

#### **MONITORING**

- 1) With the approval of the Fire Code Official, key boxes may be monitored by a building fire alarm system, utilizing a supervisory signal as approved on the Fire Alarm or Sprinkler Monitoring plans.
- 2) The method of connection or otherwise securing of any key box shall not interfere with the quick, safe and easy operation of the key box.

#### **INSPECTIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

- 1) After installation and regularly thereafter, key boxes shall be inspected and secured by the Fire Code Official.
- 2) The property owners or other representative shall be responsible for maintaining key boxes operable and secure at all times.
- 3) The property owners or other representative shall be responsible for ensuring that keys, contained within key boxes are current and will operate all locks effectively for all areas described within this Standard.

#### **RETROFITS ON EXISTING BUILDINGS**

- 1) When required by the Fire Code Official, a minimum of one (1) key box shall be installed on the exterior of existing buildings or premises if one or more of the following conditions exist:
  - a) Emergency access would be extremely difficult or time consuming, which could likely result in an increased risk to life safety or cause extensive fire damage
  - b) Forcible entry operations could cause significant and costly damage to the premises, and such damage could be avoided by the installation of an access key box(s.)
- 2) Key boxes required on existing buildings shall be permitted to be a surface mounted type with a hinged door, installed at an elevation of six (6') feet to seven (7') feet above finished grade and within ten (10) feet of the main entrance door or in a location approved by the Fire Code Official.



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**SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

- 1) Buildings which have multiple tenant spaces shall have a key box installed near the door providing access to the fire alarm panel, fire sprinkler riser, and other fire protection systems as required by SBCFPD codes and Standards.
- 2) Key boxes shall not be installed on columns, architectural features such as "pop-outs," or any other place where security or visibility may be compromised.
- 3) For large buildings with multiple entrances, there shall be a key box at each entrance that is separated from other main entrances more than five hundred (500) feet along fire access roadways.
- 4) Buildings or facilities that have staff on the premises 24 hours a day may submit a written request to the Fire Code Official to waive the requirement for a key box. All such requests are subject to final approval by the Fire Code Official.
- 5) In high-rise and other large buildings, where numerous sets of access devices may be required, master keys may be placed in a secure vault or cabinet immediately inside the main entrance or fire control room within the building. The exterior key box shall contain keys to this vault or cabinet.

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**DIAGRAM A-4.1: KNOX BOX MOUNTING HEIGHT**

