



**DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES  
DIVISION OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CODE COMPLIANCE**

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To: Property Owners / Building Representatives

Subject: KNOX BOX – Rapid Entry System to Comply with Fire Department Access Regulation

You have received this document as a result from a recent Fire / Life Safety Inspection from the Montgomery Co. Fire Marshal's Office, or as a response from the Fire Department where a Knox Box Rapid Entry System would have assisted the Fire Department accessing the building for the service required.

**WHAT IS A Knox Box?**

Knox Box systems provide Montgomery County Fire/Rescue personnel fast access to your property or place of business in the event of an emergency. The advantages of installing a Knox Box System are: *a standardized countywide system, eliminates time delays in gaining access, reduces the need for forcible entry, reduces incidence of property damage, and helps maintain security of your property.*

**CODE REQUIREMENTS:**

The State of Maryland Fire Prevention Code (COMAR 29.06.01) adopted the National Fire Protection Association, NFPA 1, Uniformed Fire Code 2015 Edition which states under sections 18.2.2.1 and 18.2.2.2 that the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), the Montgomery County Fire Marshal has the authority to require an access box (or boxes) to be installed in an accessible location to permit access to or within a structure or areas to include gated subdivisions and developments that are deemed difficult.

Montgomery County Executive Regulation 22.00.07.86 also covers this requirement. The Montgomery County Fire Marshal representative will recommend a box size based on the items we will be requesting for each Knox Box. There is a list of items listed on another sheet in this packet.

**HOW TO PURCHASE YOUR Knox PRODUCTS:**

The Montgomery County official will issue you a signed copy of an official Knox order form, if not or if you need additional copies please contact the Fire Marshal's Office at 240-777-2457. You may also receive electronic authorization from an official through the Knox Application by providing the Montgomery County official with information such as product model number, installation address, and your contact information. Typically, a 3200 or 4400 series Knox Box works for most property types, you should work with the requesting official in determining what is best for your property. You will also have options for your preference on color and the option of recessed or surface mount. We request that you use the form provided or through the issuing official's Knox Application to ensure you get the appropriate key cylinder so your items will work within the countywide system.



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**WHERE TO INSTALL YOUR Knox Box:**

Knox boxes are usually installed at the main entrance of a structure or at the point where fire/rescue units will enter your property. When mounting your Knox Box, install it four (4) feet from the finished grade surface to the key hole, and normally within three (3) feet of the main entry door. An Inspector from the Montgomery County Fire Marshal's Office can assist you with determining the best location to mount your Knox Box.

The box will be shipped with the door open, and may have a pre-wired sensor within the Knox Box. This sensor can be wired to your facilities security system; this feature is NOT required by Montgomery County.

The Knox Box also comes with a red reflective sticker that may be placed on an entrance door to indicate the presence of a box on site.

Once you have the Box(es) mounted, and keys and other items requested below ready for installation, please contact the official that gave you the form to schedule a time to meet. You may also contact the Fire Marshal's Office, to schedule an Inspector to meet you on site at 240-777-2457.

**ITEMS TO BE PLACED IN THE BOX:**

Where one box is installed we will be asking for three sets of keys or access control devices. If your building has more than one Knox Box only two key sets are required per box. Each set of keys needs to be on a separate Key ring and labeled. Each key on the ring needs to be color coded to the list below. Paint or plastic markings are suggested. Access Control devices, like Key Cards or Key Fobs may just be labeled.

**GREEN – Main Entrance and all Master Keys**

**BLUE – Fire Alarm and Reset Keys (Panels, Detectors, etc.)**

**RED – Elevator / Fireman Control Keys**

**YELLOW – Boiler / HVAC / Sprinkler Room (s) Keys**

**BLACK – Other Keys (All Need identified or labeled)**

Other items that are highly encouraged to be placed in your Knox Box that will provide assistance to the Fire Department include, but are not limited to:

- \* Laminated floor plans that include building information such as electrical, HVAC, Fire Control, and Sprinkler Rooms. Alarm Reset locations, Fire Pump, Sprinkler Control valves, and any building systems controls.
- \* Laminated cards for after hours or emergency contacts.
- \* Laminated information that is specific for you building.
- \* The hoist way and/or elevator rescue keys.

**ONCE THE BOX IS INSTALLED:**

A Knox Box is only as useful as the keys that are installed in it. The Code requires you to maintain fire department access, and to notify The County when access has changed. This means any change in locking arrangement needs to be communicated and new keys/fobs need to be provided to be placed in the box.

