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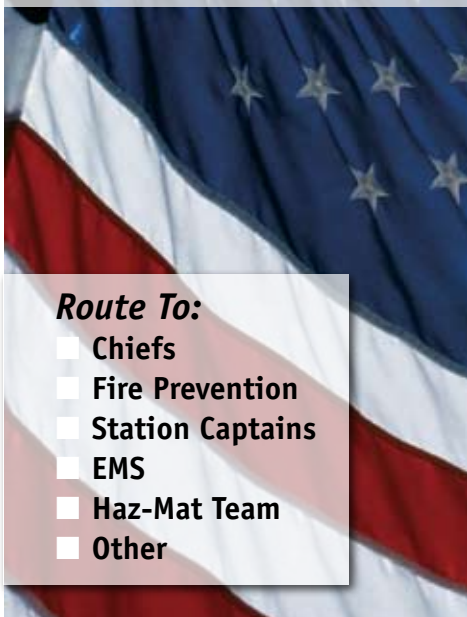
Knox Company • 1601 Deer Valley Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85027 • 800-552-5669 • Fax 623-587-2299 • www.knoxbox.com • E-mail: info@knoxbox.com

System Integrity Maintained



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Route To:

- Chiefs
- Fire Prevention
- Station Captains
- EMS
- Haz-Mat Team
- Other



Fort Worth, Texas, like many large cities in America, has a downtown district that experiences a great deal of foot traffic. The fire department connections in these high traffic areas tend to experience more problems with missing caps than less traveled areas. When the caps are missing, the connections become trash receptacles. While Fort Worth is no exception to having problems with missing caps in their downtown area, they have taken the initiative to rectify this situation by updating their ordinance to require locking FDC plugs.

“When the 2003 IFC was announced, we created an amendment to include the requirement for a locking FDC plug, we amended our code to require any new construction to install the locking FDC plug,” Captain Brian Hannah said.

The Fort Worth code reads as follows:

903.3.7.1 Locking FDC Caps.

New sprinkler installation shall be equipped with locking fire department connections caps as approved by the code official. Existing sprinkler installation will require approved locking fire department connection caps to be installed when directed by the code official.

While the code isn't retroactive, it does give the department the authority to require locking plugs on existing structures

if there is a problem with missing caps. Hannah further elaborated, “Existing buildings are only required to install the plugs when required by a code official. A code official will require the locking plug if a building continually has missing caps.”



Gerald Esparza, Fire Inspector, installing FDC plug.

Commenting on the condition of the FDC connections prior to implementing locking plugs, Captain Brian Hannah said, “Missing caps were becoming a very common violation. Brass caps were stolen, and we would find coke cans and rocks stuck in the system. With the price of brass caps being high, many building owners were replacing them with plastic or thin metal covers,

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Editorial

This month we look at three departments of varying sizes that have implemented the Knox Program. Each department has customized the program and its implementation to fit their particular community. We also explore the role volunteers have played not only in the fire service but in America as a whole.

During this summer season, we continue our busy tradeshow schedule. Hopefully we'll see you at a show in your part of the country. Check out our schedule on page 7 to see when we'll be in your area.

The Knox newsletter is the fire departments voice as well as ours. If you would like to share how your department has solved an issue by instituting the Knox program, or if you have some valuable pointers for departments just implementing the system, let us spread the word in the newsletter. Please contact me at 800.552.5669 ext 505 or cjones@knoxbox.com.

Cynthia Jones



Publisher
Knox Company

Editor **Art Director**
Cynthia Jones Cynthia Weiss

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Accountable in Albany



Deputy Chief Robert C. Forezzi presents the new Knox Box Key Tag to Lieutenant Michael Cox.



Deputy Chief Robert C. Forezzi Sr., of Albany, New York's Department of Fire and Emergency Services, is over the Fire Prevention/Investigation and Codes Division. His department is responsible for ensuring all buildings in Albany are up to code. "I sit on the planning and review board for the city, and ensure all new buildings meet code," Forezzi commented. There are several benefits to having the code inspection being part of the Public Safety Department. First it allows the firefighters to familiarize themselves with all the different types of structures located in their community that they may have to enter in an emergency. Additionally, they have a better knowledge of the current construction and materials used within their jurisdiction. All useful information during an emergency.

Albany began its Knox Program in 1990. "We've had great success with it," Deputy Chief Forezzi stated. "Having a Knox-Box is very inexpensive insurance. We don't take doors down like we use to." Previously if an alarm was sounding and a key holder could not be located, the department would have to break into the building to further investigate

the situation. In most cases, the cost to repair the break-in exceeded the cost of one Knox-Box® key box.

With the Knox Program, Albany's Department of Fire and Emergency Services is able to minimize damage and keep their apparatus in service. Deputy Chief Forezzi said; "We can shut a sprinkler down on false alarms and reduce damage. Also, by being able to get in and out quickly, our apparatus are out of service for a much shorter period of time. If a call comes in while an apparatus is out of service responding to another call, an apparatus from another firehouse has to respond, and in many cases it's further away causing the response time to be negatively impacted."

The Knox Program is "a win win situation for the fire department and community," Forezzi shared.

"We're currently working on a program using our installation report to add the location of where each box is located to our CAD system so when a call is made, responders know where the box is located at that particular address," Forezzi commented. Having this information readily available on their system should

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Saving Time and Resources



Lieutenant Dale Fahrney of the Miami Township Division of Fire/EMS located in Miamisburg, Ohio, works in the Fire Prevention Bureau. The Fire Prevention Bureau works to ensure all businesses in the community are code compliant. In addition, the Bureau works to ensure code compliance with developers regarding all new construction in the township and performs plan reviews of new and existing structures.

Lt. Fahrney also serves as the Division's Incident Safety Officer (ISO). The ISO has the responsibility of making sure firefighters are performing their job while following all established safety guidelines.

Lieutenant Fahrney was promoted to his current position in 2003. "Previously I had been working on line as a full time firefighter/paramedic. While going out on calls, we had instances where we could not get into businesses and had to damage a door or window just to gain access," Fahrney stated. As Fire Inspector, Fahrney explored different options to see if a better solution could be found, and decided the Knox-Box® System was the solution to their access problems. In early 2003, the Miami Township Division of Fire/EMS adopted the Knox System with the support of Fire Chief David B. Fulmer.

Implementing the new system has gone smoothly for the Division. "We already had an ordinance to allow for these boxes so a new ordinance was not required," shared Fahrney. "We gave all current businesses a one year grace period to have a Knox-Box® installed. We are now in the enforcement phase."

Fahrney further explained; "For the most part, business owners have no problem with the system. They just want to know how and where to get the product and that it is a secure system. I sell them



Lieutenant Dale Fahrney shows KeySecure® unit in apparatus.


on the theory of no damage." With the key boxes, damage to doors and windows are no longer an issue. The cost of the box is much less than the cost to replace or repair a window or door.

While the majority of the business owners have readily implemented the system, there were a few who had some concerns. The Fire Prevention Bureau worked with these businesses to calm their concerns. Fahrney stated, "There are always a few businesses that have concerns regarding the security of the system. They're handing over their business's key and need to feel secure about the security of the system. I have a demo box to show them and a box that someone attempted to break into but couldn't get in it. Once they get the demo box in their hands, they can feel how secure it is and their fears are alleviated."

Lieutenant Fahrney selects the location and mounting height of each box. When he goes to lock the box, he notes the location and height of the box and provides the information to the Miami Township Communications Center so it can be coordinated into the computer aided dispatch system. When Fire/EMS equipment is dispatched, a dispatch information sheet is printed. Each information sheet lists if there is a Knox-Box key box and where it is located.

"Multiple times the Knox-Box system has saved time and resources. If we make a call and we find nothing amiss, we close the building back up as if we were never there. We do contact the business owner to let them know of the incident and what was or was not discovered," Fahrney

explained. In addition, the Division is in the process of implementing a formalized reporting system that will document and notify occupants when a Knox-Box has been accessed. "We have a large retail community and a lot of the business owners live an hour away. Having the boxes has saved us countless man-hours," further explained Fahrney. "We've also used the boxes in an EMS mode as well. We arrived at an apartment community with someone down and locked inside their apartment. The apartment communities Knox-Box contained the grand master key, and once again prevented damage as well as expedited EMS care to a Township resident."

The Miami Township Division of Fire/EMS serves a 22.08 square mile area with a nighttime population of 26,000 and a daytime population of close to 65,000. In addition to a large business park and several major highways that run through the area, the Township is home to the Dayton Mall. The Division of Fire/EMS, which consists of 35 career and 40 part-time employees, work out of 4 stations. In 2005, they responded to approximately 3,800 emergencies. 

Volunteerism: Our Most Valuable Resource by Larry Pigg



It is April 1942. The allied forces and the country are in shock from the attacks at Pearl Harbor and the Bataan Death March.

Morale is low as a result of a series of defeats against the Japanese forces. On the flight deck of the USS Hornet, sixteen B25 Mitchells are being prepared for the most daring mission of WWII. As he monitored the preparation, Medal of Honor recipient Lt. Colonel Jimmie Doolittle, in one simple statement summed up the spirit of his squadron 'The Raiders', the Greatest Generation of WWII, to the heroes that serve in the Gulf today when he said, "There is nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer". Doolittle's Raiders suffered

According to United States Fire Administration (USFA), of the roughly 30,000 fire departments and 51,000 individual stations, only a small percentage,

"Volunteer firefighters comprise 75-percent of the firefighters in this country and protect almost half the population."

are manned by full time paid firefighters. Volunteer firefighters comprise 75-percent of the firefighters in this country and protect almost half the population. In America, roughly 90-percent of all the fire departments, covering over 90-percent of the geographic area, are fully or

Emerging Trends

In A Profile of the Rural Fire Problem in the United States, the U.S. Fire Administration reports some dramatic trends. The smallest communities have the highest death rates. They also have the highest per capita rate of reported fires. These are the communities that are served by primarily volunteer/ combination departments. The report stated " because of typically longer emergency response times, a higher proportion of rural fires result in damage that extends to entire structures rather than being confined to objects or rooms of origin. Further, rural areas have proportionally more structure fires than nationwide statistics indicates, including residential fire structures."

The conventional opinion is that volunteer departments only occasionally have incidents, and the ones they do have are usually not of the scale that 'big city' fire departments face. This could not be further from the truth. According to the Fire Protection Handbook, the risks to combination and volunteer firefighters



a 100-percent loss of aircraft and a 22-percent loss of crew members; nonetheless they delivered a devastating blow that had a profound impact on the course of the war. Throughout history, volunteers have given their time, talent, and money to the betterment of others. That same spirit of selflessness, honor and duty has been part of the fire service in America for over 200 years and is present today in the countless faces of our Nations volunteer firefighters.

partially protected by volunteers. In fact, according to USFA, only 6-percent of the fire departments in America are comprised of full time firefighters. In most of the country the local volunteer fire department is not just the first line of defense; it is the only line of defense, and the only thing standing between the citizens and a potential catastrophic outcome.

closely resemble those of the large career departments. Section 7-2 of the Fire Protection Handbook lists some of the unique challenges faced by rural and volunteer departments. These include stockpiles of fertilizers and pesticides, large, many times unregulated, fuel and chemical storage tanks, grain elevators and other structures unique to the agriculture business. A rural department could face a fire in a warehouse, barn, transfer station, distribution facility, processing plant, storage building, trailer park, or

gated new custom home community. Add to this, the trend of large companies like Mercedes, Toyota, and Honda building large assembly factories in what has been a quiet farm community and you can see how the challenges become even more complex. So while the engine looks old, the closest water supply is a mile away, and the firefighter does not have an air pack, the incident is just as intense.

Challenges

The demands on the thousands of volunteer fire organizations become greater each year. From the mandatory increases in training hours, the requirements to staff EMS and Haz-mat, to the rise in emergency calls, the strain on volunteer firefighters is growing. Today many volunteer departments must dedicate a significant amount of time soliciting donations for equipment and supplies to be adequately prepared for any contingency. With the projected cuts to the Department of Homeland Security Aid to Fire Grant Program (AFG) for fiscal 2007, the situation could become more critical.

Recently, I spoke with long time

is occurring at breakneck speed. The growth is forcing agencies to re-designate existing funds to part time and full time firefighters. The redeployment of scarce


“From the mandatory increases in training hours, the requirements to staff EMS and Haz-mat, to the rise in emergency calls, the strain on volunteer firefighters is growing.”

funds generally does not allow for hiring enough personnel so the only option is to utilize as many volunteers as possible in attempts to fill the gaps. This is typical of metro suburban areas around the country where growth supersedes sufficient funding for a faster transition to paid positions” (reference: VCOS Red Ribbon Report). Chief Windisch went on to say, “Pure” volunteer systems are stressed to the limit in today’s world. Insufficient funds and the lack of citizens volunteering, along with more and more business and training requirements, exacerbates the problem. That does not mean that all agencies are deficient. “It takes education and strong leadership skills for the fire chief to overcome the challenges

associated with creating and maintaining a good emergency service agency. Today’s fire chief is no longer “the best firefighter” – he/she must be focused on the business of running the agency, and the community must be involved to determine exactly what level of service is necessary for the community. Trying to be all things to everyone is not the way to meet the needs of the individual community. It takes intestinal fortitude to say “no”. (reference : VCOS Blue Ribbon Report). The complete reports that Chief Windisch referenced,

VCOS ‘Blue Ribbon Report’, “Preserving and Improving the Future of the Volunteer Fire Service” and ‘Red Ribbon Report’, “Lighting the Path of Evolution” can be viewed at www.vcos.org.

The Future

The spirit of volunteerism and service is alive and well in the fire service today. While the issues grow in complexity each year, young men and women will rise to the challenge. From the first formal volunteer fire department organized by Ben Franklin in Philadelphia over 270 years ago, to the large combination departments of today, the challenges are daunting. From the Ponderosa Volunteer Fire of recruitment, retention, training, funding, and maintaining modern equipment grow each year. Couple this with increased emergency call volume and complexity, it is easy to see that the next generation of volunteer firefighters and chief officers will face challenges their counterparts thirty years ago never imagined. The needs are great, while time and money is at a premium. Without the volunteer spirit and willingness to give more than you take, the mission is impossible and lives are at risk. As WWII raged in Europe and the Pacific the words of Winston Churchill spoke to the countless volunteers that served both on the front lines and the factories that supplied the war effort. His words are just as meaningful today: “We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.” 



friend Chief Fred C. Windisch, Chief of the Ponderosa Texas Volunteer Fire Department about this topic. Chief Windisch, the former Harris County (Houston) Fire Marshal, President of the Volunteer/ Combination Chief Officers Section (VCOS) of the International Fire Chief’s Association, and the 2000 Fire Chief Magazine’s Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year had this to say: “Here in Harris County, Texas, the third most populous county in the United States, the transition from all volunteer to combination agencies

Maintaining Integrity

Continued from page 1



Gerald Esparza locking FDC plug.

which, of course, are not durable at all. We saw this as an opportunity to address the problems we were seeing, while saving the building owners money in the long run. Most were very receptive.”

As with any new program some obstacles were encountered. The biggest obstacles Fort Worth encountered was making sure everyone was trained on the new locking plugs. “There wasn’t a problem with buy-in (from the firefighters) so much as a problem with training everyone on the use of the plugs. Also, there was much discussion on where the keys (wrenches) should be kept, and of course everyone had a different idea of what would be best,” Hannah explained.

When Fort Worth first adopted the locking plugs, they received 150 keywrenches – one for each apparatus and all fire inspectors. These keywrenches were distributed at the department’s annual ladder testing. Each apparatus was given a wrench along with training on how to use the locking plug and wrench. Once all apparatus were equipped with a keywrench, the ordinance for the locking

plugs took effect. “Each apparatus and all inspectors have a keywrench,” Hannah said.

“The main problem with implementation was that we couldn’t put a single plug on until we had a key (wrench) on every fire truck and the crews were trained in their use. Also, we had to develop and disseminate an information bulletin to all the companies, and have them acknowledge that they received the information. It really wasn’t a problem so much as it took some time to get the groundwork done so we could begin having the plugs installed,” Hannah further elaborated.

The building owners and contractors order the locking plugs directly from Knox. The locking plugs are installed either by a contractor, or the fire inspector will install them at the time of inspection. To assist with the installation of the plugs, “most of the bigger contracting companies have ordered their own wrenches,” Hannah noted.

Fort Worth has not encountered any resistance to requiring the locking plugs. Many business owners have actually found the locking plugs to be a cost savings. Hannah explained, “The brass caps have gotten to be so expensive. If a building owner has to replace them several times, the cost is about the same as the locking plug.”

In addition to the cost saving, those buildings with locking FDC’s now know their connections are free of debris and ready when and if they are needed. “It’s obvious we don’t have as many missing caps. Property owners have less theft since there aren’t as many brass caps to steal. The integrity of the system is maintained a little higher since rocks and things can’t get in,” commented Hannah.

Fort Worth serves a diverse population of 540,000 with approximately 800 firefighters working out of 39 stations. ◻

Accountable...

Continued from page 2

help response times.

Recently new legislation was passed requiring all elevators be keyed the same. Forezzi explained; “We don’t like to add expenses. By using the Knox-Box, we eliminate the need for all elevators to be keyed the same. The fire department only carries the Knox key which is the same for each box. The different elevator keys are contained in the Knox-Box. We have access to the different elevator keys via the Knox key.” The spirit of the new requirement is met since the fire department only has to carry one key.

Maintaining the integrity of the Knox system and the Knox Master Key is important to Albany. As a result, they have invested in Sentralok® Master Key Retention Devices. The master key is only released from the unit via tones issued by dispatch. “The key goes from the apparatus to the Knox-Box and back to the apparatus. I’ve put a long piece of wood on the key so it’s easier to find if someone accidentally drops it. The piece of wood doesn’t have any markings but is large enough for us to easily see. Also, it makes it difficult for someone to accidentally place the key in their pocket. And hopefully provides more accountability.” Albany’s Sentralok units also have a strobe light that flashes when the key is released – providing yet another layer of accountability.

Albany has recently just begun a Residential Knox-Box program for those individuals who live alone and have repeat calls for EMS help. The department recommends the individual install the temporary residential box. This program is just in the beginning stages.

Albany has 260 career firefighters working out of 8 firehouses. “We sell the community on the Knox program by focusing on the accountability and security of the system. ◻

Knox Contacts

FIRE SERVICE MANAGERS

Bill Brown
888-342-3530
Fax 888-342-6655

Alabama
Florida
Georgia
Louisiana
Mississippi
Tennessee

Joe Shanley
866-223-2623
Fax 866-223-2640

Illinois
Iowa
Minnesota
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wisconsin

Bryan McIntosh
877-707-5286
Fax 877-773-4197

Delaware
Maryland
New Jersey
North Carolina
South Carolina
Virginia
Washington D.C.

Jon Kemp
866-436-0493
Fax 866-436-0494

Connecticut
Maine
Massachusetts
New Hampshire
New York
Rhode Island
Vermont

Jeff Moser
866-361-5844
Fax 866-361-5845

Alaska
Colorado
Idaho
Montana
Nevada
Oregon
Utah
Washington
Wyoming

Larry Lulich
866-889-4181
Fax 866-613-9412

Indiana
Kentucky
Michigan
Ohio
Pennsylvania
West Virginia

Marlene Briones
866-702-4406
Fax 866-275-4039

Arizona
California
Hawaii
New Mexico

Rebecca Heller
866-417-8458
Fax 800-704-0889

Arkansas
Kansas
Missouri
Nebraska
Oklahoma
Texas

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1601 W. Deer Valley Road
Phoenix, Arizona 85027
623-687-2300 • 800-552-5669
Fax 623-687-2299 • www.knoxbox.com

KNOX NEWS

KeySecure® 3 Software Updates

Keeping your KeySecure® 3 system updated will help to maintain a worry free operation. The Knox Company recommends you check the Knox website for updates on a regular basis. If you have not updated the KeySecure Software or Firmware in the past month, Knox strongly encourages you to update your programs at this time. If you have any questions regarding this process, please call 1-866-566-9269 for technical assistance.

2006 Tradeshow Schedule

Tennessee Fire Chiefs	Nashville	TN	July 15-18
CHSEMA	Orange Co	CA	July 16-19
SC State FF convention	Myrtle Beach	SC	July 18-22
Missouri Valley	Omaha	NE	July 19-21
Texas Municipal Fire School	College Station	TX	July 23
Firehouse Expo	Baltimore	MD	July 27-29
Arizona Fire Chiefs	Litchfield Park	AZ	July 28
AMBOY IL FD	Amboy	IL	August 24
North Carolina	Greensboro	NC	August 24-27
IAFC	Dallas	TX	Sept 15-18
Oregon EMS	Portland	OR	Sept 16-17
Long Island, NY	Hempstead	NY	Sept 22-24
Iowa Fire Convention	Cedar Falls	IA	Sept 23-24

FDIC Weathervane Winner

Kevin Lalley, Dixon Rural Fire Department – Dixon, IL – **CONGRATULATIONS KEVIN!**

The Key to a Secure System

Knox System security is always important. Protecting the Knox® Master Key and documents listing installation addresses helps ensure that the Knox System is solely for the benefit of your department.

The four security steps listed below are the ways your department contributes to the security of the Knox program in your community. Thank you for following these simple yet important rules.

- 1. Keep all Knox keys in a secure place.**
- 2. Do not release the Knox provided keys to any non fire department or law enforcement personnel.**
- 3. Do not provide Knox installation database access to any non fire department or law enforcement personnel unless required by law.**
- 4. Notify Knox immediately of loss, theft or attempted duplication of any key.**

Now Available: Sentralok® A

The next generation of Sentralok®, Sentralok A, is now available. This enhanced contemporary replacement for the Sentralok I decoder, has many new and enhanced features. It represents the latest generation of master key retention technology and is a direct result of listening to fire service requirements. The newest features enhance the Sentralok I system by providing:

- Full audit trail capabilities
- Infrared communication with PDA's
- Eight character scrolling LED information display
- PIN code access override
- DTMF or MSK (600) communication capabilities
- Optional strobe light (blue, red or amber)

The Sentralok Encoder is replaced with Knox PC based Windows application software that generates the proper release code frequency via a standard modem (MSK) or sound card (DTMF). Dispatch uses this software to communicate an encrypted code


to a Decoder mounted in each apparatus. The encrypted signal releases the master key secured in the remote Decoder. Once the key is released, fire personnel can access the contents of the Knox-Box where building entry keys and floor plans are stored.

For added security, a special option allows for an additional required authorized PIN code. After the unique signal is received via two-way radio, the Sentralok A unit display will prompt for the additional authorized PIN code to complete the release. Once the authorized PIN code is entered, the master key is released.

For areas where radio communication does not work, an optional emergency PIN code is available. Firefighters simply enter this special PIN code and the Knox® Master Key is released. A department can assign a unique PIN code to those with the ability to override the dispatch release.

The Audit Trail feature provides reports on the time and date of the release, and the length of time the key was in use. If a PIN code was used, it will also list user's name and PIN code. System data and all activity records are downloaded from



the each Decoder into a PDA via infrared communication. Once the data is in the PC, it can be reviewed in user-friendly reports that are easily customized for unique department requirements. Sentralok A combines proven master key security technology with the convenience of the Knox-Box® program. The system is the premier method for securing and tracking master keys and a valuable operating procedure to departments nationwide. These departments can assure property owners that the Knox Master Key is always safe and secure. 



1601 W. Deer Valley Road
Phoenix, AZ 85027

