

Key Lock Boxes

On March 19, 2007 the Maquoketa City Council passed Ordinance No. 1044 establishing the use and restrictions of key lock boxes. Below you will find some frequently asked questions regarding the Knox Rapid Entry System the Maquoketa Fire Department now uses.

What is the Knox Rapid Entry System?

The Knox Rapid Entry System is a secure emergency program developed for property owners and fire departments. When a fire breaks out, or there is an emergency, the Knox Rapid Entry System allows firefighters immediate entry into buildings and property without forced entry damage or delay. Property owners store entrance keys, access cards, gate keys etc., in high-security Knox-Boxes mounted near building entrances. Each Knox-Box purchased by a property owner is keyed to a single master key controlled by the fire department.

How does the Knox Rapid Entry System Benefit Property Owners?

When an emergency occurs, the Knox Rapid Entry System will allow the fire department to spend less time and fewer resources gaining access to your building. This faster access will result in a more rapid control of the emergency situation. This could mean faster fire control or more rapid shut-off of a sprinkler system, resulting in less water damage. In addition, the Knox Rapid Entry System allows fire department access without damage to the building. Without this system, the fire department will gain access by forcible entry. This generally results in damage to doors or windows and their associated facings. After forcible entry, it is generally difficult to secure a building again after the emergency has been controlled. Repairs made after a single forcible entry will likely pay for the purchase and installation of a Knox Box. With the Knox Rapid Entry System, property owners save in two ways: first, with more rapid control of emergencies and second, with less damage caused by fire department entry.

Who is required to install the Knox Rapid Entry System? May other property owners participate in the system?

On March 19, 2007, the Maquoketa City Council adopted an ordinance to require the use of key lock boxes. The ordinance requires all commercial buildings and all apartment buildings with common areas that are locked to the general public and constructed after the date the ordinance was approved to install a key lock box. Existing buildings which are converted to commercial use or converted to an apartment building with common areas that are locked to the general public after the date the ordinance is approved will also be required to install a key lock box. Owners of existing commercial buildings or apartment buildings may participate in the system, but are not required to do so. If a property owner chooses to participate in the system, the key lock box and installation must meet all requirements of the ordinance. Knox also makes boxes designed specifically for residential use. These boxes are keyed to the same fire department master key and are installed in the same manner. Any participation by residential properties is strictly voluntary. The cost of installation will be at the building owner's expense.

In the past, I have supplied the Fire Department with keys to my building. Will the department still keep the keys?

No. Over the years, the Fire Department has accumulated too many keys. It has become nearly impossible to keep up with individual buildings. As of May 31, 2007, the Fire Department will no longer hold any keys to any buildings. If you want the Fire Department to have access to your building, you will have to install a Knox Box.