



**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
COMMUNITY SAFETY DIVISION**

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

Standard Number

A-4

Revision Date:

**FIRE PREVENTION STANDARD
FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS KEY BOXES**

AUTHORITY

Sections 102.9 of the 2013 California Fire Code and Sections 4 and 8 of the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District Fire Code Ordinance state that the Fire Code Official of the San Bernardino County Fire Department 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 503.1 and 503.2 et. seq. of the 2013 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

An application shall be made to the Fire Department for approval and installation of all key box devices. The application shall contain the following information:

- 1) Plot plan, to scale, on minimum 8 ½" X 11" size paper, showing the locations of all buildings, fire apparatus access roads, and all fire department key boxes.



**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
COMMUNITY SAFETY DIVISION**

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

Standard Number

A-4

Revision Date:

**FIRE PREVENTION STANDARD
FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS KEY BOXES**

- 2) Size(s) and type(s) of all key boxes or other access devices

All orders forms for key boxes shall be made on an original current year Knox ® Company Authorization form, which must be signed by a Fire Department representative. Applications may be obtained at the appropriate Fire Prevention office location.

DEFINITIONS

KEY BOX - An approved secure device with a lock operable only by a fire department master 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) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) Key boxes shall be ordered and purchased by the owner, contractor, developer or other responsible party only from the approved vendor, the Knox ® Company.
- 4) Key boxes shall be installed by a minimum of five feet (5') and a maximum of six feet (6') 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 in used in applications other than buildings without specific approval of the Fire Code Official. For installation of Knox ® locks on gates, see SBCFD Standard A-3.

CONTENTS

- 1) A minimum of one (1) key, magnetic card, or other access device or information as required by the Fire Code Official shall be provided for the following areas:



**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
COMMUNITY SAFETY DIVISION**

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

Standard Number

A-4

Revision Date:

**FIRE PREVENTION STANDARD
FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS KEY BOXES**

- a) Locked doors at all points of entry to buildings and areas, whether internal or external
 - 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.
- 2) In buildings that are larger than 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 magnet cards shall be provided in order to minimize the number of different access devices in key boxes.

MONITORING

- 1) Key boxes shall not be connected to, or monitored by, any fire alarm system.
- 2) With the approval of the Fire Code Official, key boxes may be monitored by a security or burglar alarm system. Key boxes that are monitored by a security system shall bear a sticker or other marker indicating the name and phone number of the monitoring company.
- 3) 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 Department inspector.
- 2) The property owners or other representative shall be solely 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, cards, and other access devices and information contained within key boxes is current will operate all locks effectively for all areas described within this Standard.



**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
COMMUNITY SAFETY DIVISION**

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

Standard Number

A-4

Revision Date:

**FIRE PREVENTION STANDARD
FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS KEY BOXES**

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 the 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 five (5) feet to six (6) feet above finished grade and within ten (10) feet of the main entrance door(s,) or in a location approved by the Fire Code Official.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

- 1) Buildings which have multiple tenant spaces and have no apparent main front entry door shall have a key box installed on the address side of the building, near the door providing access to the fire alarm panel, fire sprinkler riser, and other common area fire protection systems as required by SBCFD codes and standards. If this location is not possible or practical, then the key box shall be installed near the center of the length or width of the building.
- 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 or cards 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.



**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
COMMUNITY SAFETY DIVISION**

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

Standard Number

A-4

Revision Date:

**FIRE PREVENTION STANDARD
FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS KEY BOXES**

DIAGRAM A-4.1: KNOX BOX MOUNTING HEIGHT

