



CITY OF
SANTA ROSA

Fire Department

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**FIRE DEPARTMENT
INFORMATION BULLETIN**

SUBJECT: KEY BOXES, REQUIREMENTS AND INSTALLATION

Bulletin Number: 041
Date of Issue: January 5, 1998

Code Reference:
1997 Uniform Fire Code (UFC) 902.4
Santa Rosa City Code (SRCC), Chapter 18-44
1998 California Fire Code (CFC) 1998, Section 902.4

NOTE: This bulletin is intended to serve as a guideline to insure plan submittals address the relevant code sections and to present the Fire Department's interpretation of City, State and Federal Codes and standard industrial practices. To facilitate plan review for new installation's each requirement identified below should be clearly identified on the plans.

APPROVED PRODUCTS

The Santa Rosa Fire Department accepts approved products from the Knox Company or Supra Company. Brochures and order forms are available from the Fire Department Business Office.

CODE REQUIREMENT

When access to a structure or area is unduly difficult because of secured openings or where immediate access is necessary for life-saving, firefighting purposes or fire protection equipment purposes, the Chief is authorized to require a key box be installed in an accessible location. The key box shall be of a type approved by the Chief.

PURPOSE

To allow entry during an emergency without doing serious damage to doors and other property. Many emergency responses are to buildings when an alarm is sounding and it is unknown where or if a fire actually exists. The key box can provide keys so the building can be entered and thoroughly checked and fire protection control panels and equipment (i.e. automatic sprinkler riser) accessed, without causing expensive damage. Rapid access to buildings with fire sprinklers can be shut down by fire personnel. If the building was not damaged during forcible entry, the building can simply be re-locked after the incident.

MASTER KEY

The Santa Rosa Fire Department has the only master key to access key boxes. The Department maintains strict security of the key box keys carried on fire apparatus.

DUAL KEYED PRODUCTS

Dual keyed switches and padlocks are also accessed by submaster keys carried by the Santa Rosa Police Department and select Public Works personnel. These applications are available for gates to access roads and driveways only.

HISTORY

The two (2) approved companies that provide key boxes have no history of having their key boxes broken into, vandalized or inappropriately accessed. These companies have a 26-year reputation and the placement of hundreds of thousands of key boxes in over 6,900 communities in the U.S. and Canada. However, the tamper alarm option is recommended for key boxes.

WHERE REQUIRED

Gates and fenced areas where access is required for emergency purposes shall have an access system that allows the Fire Department rapid entry.

Electrically operated gates shall have an approved dual keyed switch. The gates shall be installed so they release in a power failure.

Buildings where access doors are secured or difficult shall have a key box.

Commercial structures that have fire protection systems, such as fire alarm systems, fire sprinkler systems, and other fixed systems, or elevators shall have a key box.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Buildings or complexes that contain processes that use significant amounts of hazardous materials shall have an approved data storage cabinet to contain information as required by UFC Article 80 and the Health and Safety Code.

LOCATION

The Fire Department shall approved the location and number of key boxes. Typically, the key box shall be placed to the right of the main entrance or near where any control valve or fire alarm panel is located. They key box shall normally be located at seven (7) feet above grade, high enough to be difficult for any vandalism but low enough to be reached by Firefighters.

APPROPRIATE KEYS

Keys to be placed in the key boxes shall include access keys to exterior doors, any locked interior doors, fire alarm panels, fire control valves, locked utility areas, elevator controls, or any other area that may be involved in an emergency.

LABELING AND COLOR CODING KEYS

Keys shall be labelled with plastic key identifiers in the colors identified below:

- Red - alarm panel key
- Green - front door master key
- Blue - sprinkler riser room key
- Yellow - elevator key

All remaining keys shall be readily identifiable as to their use.

MAINTENANCE

The property owner or tenant is responsible for maintenance of the access systems and assuring that the correct keys are placed in the key box. The Fire Department will access the box to update keys at the property owner's request. Contact the Fire Department during business hours at 543-3500 for an appointment.

CONSENT

The property owner shall give consent for the Fire Department to access they key box during routine fire inspections to assure that the keys in the box are the correct ones.