



RAPID A.C.C.E.S.S.

Volume XIII
Issue 5

Fall 2006

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Promoting Life Safety

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Route To:

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



When the Allen Park Michigan Volunteer Fire Department was established in the early 1940's, it was a community of open grassy fields with a few large wooded areas. Fighting grass fires was this new department's primary responsibility. Over the years, the community has grown to be a suburban community of more than 28,000 residents located southwest of Detroit. Allen Park evolved from an all volunteer department in the early 1940's to a full career department in 1948. Today, Allen Park has 28 career firefighter/paramedics in addition to a Fire Chief/Fire Inspector and an Administrative Clerk.

The Knox Program was adopted by Allen Park in 2002. Prior to adopting the program, firefighters were having difficulty entering buildings after hours when a fire alarm had sounded since key holders were not always readily available. In many cases, "A vehicle and crew would be tied up for a long time waiting for a key holder to arrive. Our only other option to respond, at that time, was to break the door down. With thoughts of the business owner in mind, we looked for an alternative and the Knox-Box seemed to be the solution." explained Fire Chief

Greg Murphy. "We talked to neighboring departments to see what they were doing," Chief Murphy further elaborated. "The Knox-Box System was being utilized throughout our area and seemed to be the most efficient, least costly alternative for businesses and first-responders alike, so we jumped on board."



Firefighters, Jeff O'Riley, Doug LaFond, Mike Stasick, Lieutenant Pete Zammit and Firefighter Mike Schook of the Allen Park Fire Department

"The International Building Code grants us the authority to require the boxes for all new commercial construction. While existing businesses are not required to participate in the program, we did contact every business to give them information and the choice to participate. At first, existing businesses were slow to adopt the (voluntary) program, but as we've had to use the boxes more and word has gotten around, existing businesses have begun to add the boxes on their own," stated Chief Murphy. "It's coming".

Allen Park takes great pride in providing an emergency based-Advanced Life Support

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Editorial

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

Fire Prevention Week was established over 80 years ago to commemorate the Great Chicago fire of 1871. For 2006, Fire Prevention Week will be commemorated October 8-14, 2006.

NFPA chose "Prevent Cooking Fires: Watch What You Heat" as the theme for 2006 to help teach families and kids how to keep cooking fires from starting in the first place. Cooking fires are the number 1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries.

Rapid Access is your voice and we thank you for being part of the Knox community. Please contact us if you wish to highlight your department in an upcoming newsletter.



Publisher
Knox Company

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A Community Wide Effort



Red Rocks of the Sedona Verde Valley



Ann Ziller

During the month of June, the country celebrated National Homeownership Month. As part of the celebration, the Sedona Verde Valley (Arizona) Association of REALTORS® (SVVAR) initiated a "Lock Boxes for Seniors" program, making sure seniors, especially those with medical disabilities, are able to continue living at home. "Owning a home and living in it is part of the American Dream," says Ann Ziller, SVVAR's Housing Opportunities Committee Chair. "We want to help seniors throughout the Verde Valley live at home by insuring their safety as much as possible."

Working with the Cottonwood, Camp Verde, Sedona and Verde Valley Fire Departments, the SVVAR has installed the first 30 Knox lock boxes in SVVAR's "Lock Boxes for Seniors" program. While many different individuals at each department and the SVVAR are involved in this program, there is only one primary contact per organization that deals with the other organizations. This was done to minimize any logistical problems that might arise when dealing with multiple organizations.

The SVVAR is using the Knox Residential lock boxes; allow responding fire departments quick access into a home when the resident is unable to unlock

his or her doors. Otherwise, emergency responders may lose valuable time and damage doors and/or windows while attempting entry. The boxes are keyed based upon the jurisdiction of the senior's residence. The local fire department is able to access the box using their current Knox Master Key.

Access to box locations are controlled by the Sedona Regional Communications Center's Computer Aided Dispatch System, which dispatches for all emergency medical and fire agencies in the Sedona and Verde Valley area. Should a senior with a lock box call 911 in an emergency and be unable to unlock his or her doors, the first responder can obtain access to the lock box, retrieve the key and enter the home.

The biggest challenge the SVVAR has faced in implementing this program is educating the seniors that the boxes can only be accessed by emergency responders during an emergency. Realtors do not have access. The realtors' do work with the seniors to make sure a spare key to the residence is available when the fire department and realtor come to install the box.

The cost to the homeowners for these residential boxes is based on the senior's income. Many seniors qualify to have a lock box provided at no cost.

To increase awareness for their program, the SVVAR has developed a flyer that is distributed at senior centers,

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Setting an Example in Saginaw



The Saginaw, Texas Fire Department is a full career department that currently serves a population of 18,500 residents. In addition to their city, they also provide fire and rescue service to a portion of unincorporated Tarrant County and have “Automatic Aid” agreements with six surrounding communities. Located to the North of Fort Worth, this department has 23 personnel. The entire staff is also paramedic certified. In addition to the Fire Chief, there is a Captain over Fire and EMS Operations, and seven firefighters per shift that work from two fire stations. Each shift has at least one Fire Inspector assigned to it as well.

Unique to Saginaw are four grain elevators, with two being among the largest in the nation. Combined, they have a storage capacity of over 70 million bushels of grain, or approximately 2-4% of the nations supply.

“When I became Fire Chief in 1994, we were still under the 1988 Uniform Fire Code. In 1997, we adopted the ‘97 version of the code. Included in the code was a provision for a key box program. To make it fair to all businesses as far as who did and did not have to have a key box, we decided to make it mandatory for every business to have one,” Chief Bob Harvey said. At that time, Saginaw decided to adopt and implement the Knox® Rapid Entry System. Chief Harvey elaborated; “We decided to go with the Knox System. It seemed to be the main one in use across the country, and probably still is. As new businesses came in, we required them to have a Knox-Box. All new businesses from that point on were required to have one. As we went back and did our annual inspections, we had each business owner retro and put a Knox-Box in as well. Our goal was for every business to have a key box and we are just about there.”



Firefighters/Paramedics Mark Perry and Matt Bibb; Fire Captain Scott Craver and Fire Lieutenant Doug Spears of the Saginaw Fire Department

For all newly constructed buildings, a recess mounted box is required. For existing structures, a surface Knox-Box is installed above the door. Locating it there reduces the possibility of tampering. Additionally, anything that restricts access to the property or obstructs a fire lane must provide accessibility to the fire department. “They are required to have a Knox padlock so we don’t have to cut a chain,” Chief Harvey stated.

Then just two years ago, as more buildings with sprinkler systems were added, the fire department adopted the program where it requires Knox locking plugs on the fire department connections (FDC) as well. “As we go back and do the annual inspections we have the business owners update their FDC’s as well. If they don’t already have the Knox plugs, they are required to have them added,” shared Chief Harvey. The locking plugs help to protect the integrity of a sprinkler system by preventing debris from entering and clogging the system.

“We provide advanced life support service with our apparatus and paramedics, so all our primary responding vehicles have a lockable drug box. Originally, we put

the key in our lock boxes used to secure these medications. But that was only a temporary solution,” said Chief Harvey.

“Then we started to equip all our vehicles with a Sentralok® unit, and that works great. It takes two people to access the key, the dispatcher and a firefighter. Anything transmitted over the radio is recorded so we have a record of the release,” explained Chief Harvey.

“All our apparatus are equipped with the Sentralok System now, and it works great,” added Chief Harvey.

When Saginaw first implemented the system, property owners mentioned one concern frequently. “The biggest concern when we were introducing the Knox System was ‘How do you secure the Knox Master Key?’” Chief Harvey said. Once the program is explained and the security of the master key is explained, there is no issue with the program.

Chief Harvey further elaborated, “We require all our city facilities, including the fire stations, to have a Knox-Box so that we set a good example. We practice what we preach.” ◀



The headlines are unbelievable, and the numbers, at times, are staggering. Each year, over 4,000 Americans die and 20,000 more are injured in fires. This is despite the concerted efforts of fire educators, prevention bureaus, NFPA, and advocacy groups like the National Fire Sprinkler Association. That equates to over 65 people each day that are either killed or injured. Are there certain groups of people at greater risk? It seems that there are. The elderly, children and people with particular physical limitations are at a significantly greater risk. These individuals are collectively called Special Population groups. They are the people at a higher risk than the general population. As Fire Prevention Week approaches it is important that we examine our programs and their effectiveness to determine if we are providing the best possible protection to the most vulnerable among us.

What are Special Populations? Why Are They at Increased Risk?

The term Special Population can have a number of definitions depending on the social or technical context of the discussion. As it relates to emergency managers, fire prevention, and public safety planners 'special populations' are groups or individuals whose circumstances put them in a position to warrant extra consideration when planning for evacuation, fire safety or catastrophic event survivability. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, there are 60 million Americans living with some level of physical impairment that impede them in performing normal daily activities.

Special populations are at risk for a number of reasons. The U.S. Fire Administration states that decreased

Examples of Special Population groups in America are:

- **School Age Children**
(50 Million)
- **Senior Adults**
(35 Million)
- **Hearing Impaired**
(28 Million)
- **Visually Impaired**
(11 Million)
- **Limited or No Mobility**
(7 Million permanently dependant on wheelchair and/ or cane)
- **Assisted Living/ Institutionalized Individuals**
(Patients/ Inmates/ Staff)

mobility, health, sight, and hearing may limit a person's ability to take the quick action necessary to escape during a fire emergency. Depending on physical limitations, many actions an individual can take to protect themselves from dangers of fire may require help from a caretaker, neighbor or outside individual.

Managing the Risks

While personal responsibility is the key to individual fire safety, those in positions sworn to protect the citizens must do everything to minimize the risks and maximize survivability. What have you done to identify the potential risks? Some special population groups will not be those you normally associate with individuals with special needs like the blind or hearing impaired. Every community has people that are living in situations that might put them at additional risk. Are there warning systems for the rural population in your jurisdiction? Do you have a large number

of people living in manufactured housing in the middle of tornado alley? It is interesting that many people would never think of living in a mobile home in a region prone to tornadoes, but because of school overcrowding, are perfectly willing to let their children spend each day attending class in an equally vulnerable "portable building" away from the main school building with no warning or communication link.

Regardless of other risk groups people might be part of, the one that eventually impacts most Americans is age. Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau suggests that America is getting older at a rapidly growing rate. Currently seniors comprise 12.5% of the population. That statistic is expected to rise to over 20% in just a few decades. With decreased cognitive and reactive abilities, older Americans are at a greater risk of injury due to fire.

Currently seniors comprise 12.5% of the population. That statistic is expected to rise to over 20% in just a few decades.

To address these issues, the U.S. Fire Administration has developed an awareness program geared toward people with special needs. Here are some of their suggestions along with some from fire safety professionals. The USFA program is available at www.usfa.gov.

Institutional and Workplace Fire Safety.

Both the International Fire Code and NFPA require that businesses and other key occupancies have, and periodically test, emergency plans. *NFPA 1, Uniform Fire Code* goes so far as to require that these contingency plans are developed in

accordance with a specific standard; *NFPA 1600, Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs*. The code also requires that these plans be submitted to the local authority for review. This includes conducting regularly scheduled fire drills.

Install and Maintain Smoke Alarms.

This includes Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors. Working smoke alarms installed on every level of a residence will dramatically increase a person's chance of



Fire Safety in the Home.

Fires can escalate very rapidly. Victims may have as little as 2 minutes to evacuate. As the USFA program states: *"It is vitally important to make and practice escape plans. In the event of a fire, remember, time is the biggest enemy and every second counts!"* People with limited mobility should be encouraged to have their bedroom on the ground floor and as close as possible to an exit. If a residential lock box would help emergency crews gain faster access, encourage them to purchase one. For residents that live in high-rise apartment structures, help develop safe evacuation plans that do not involve using the elevator.

survival. People with physical limitations should be aware of special fire safety devices that are available, such as smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light for the deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, smoke alarms with a strobe light outside the house can catch the attention of neighbors or others who might pass by. Smoke alarm and CO detector batteries need to be tested monthly and changed, at least annually.

Promote Residential Fire Sprinklers.

Fire sprinklers are effective in saving lives and property. Robert Trotter, Executive Director of the Florida Fire Sprinkler Association highlights the importance of residential fire sprinklers. *"The National Fire Protection Association's 2004 report on annual fire death and injury statistics from*

home fires in the United States indicated that 8 out of 10 fire deaths occur in the place people feel the safest... their home. Residential fire sprinklers are recognized as the leading technology available to reduce the overall fire death toll, yet remain slow to take hold in the residential marketplace." Mr. Trotter went on to say; *"Without question, a home fire sprinkler system will control a fire, protect against injury, life loss, and property damage; improve the chance for occupants to escape or be evacuated; and significantly improve safety for firefighters. Home fire sprinklers can control or even extinguish a fire in less time than it would take for the fire department to arrive. Installing both smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system reduces your risk of death in a home fire by 82% relative to having neither."*

In some respects, we are all members of some special group. Some of us are over fifty, some are smokers, while others are veterans, or a combination of all three. In the context of public safety and survivability, special populations are those people that may require additional consideration when planning for emergencies. It has been said that by the time you consider all of the different groups that may be considered vulnerable during an emergency; it becomes hard to find any individual that fits into none of the risk categories. Eventually all of us will fall into a category of individuals that will need some additional assistance. Seniors, people with disabilities, and young children: our legacy and our future. We owe it to them and society to do everything possible to protect them from injury or death due to fire or any other catastrophic event. 



Promoting Life Safety

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Chief Gregory Murphy

rescue service to its community. All firefighters are highly trained paramedics and as a result are able to provide some treatments that are generally reserved for emergency room staff. One of Allen Park's goals is to provide the highest level of pre-hospital emergency care for those in their community.

An off-shoot of this goal has been the adoption of a Residential Knox-Box® Program. Earlier this year, the Allen Park Department received a grant from the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Department funding the purchase of portable Knox-Box key boxes for senior and disabled residents.

"We purchased nine boxes with door brackets. We had an article in our newsletter offering the boxes to individuals with a disability or illness, which could make it difficult to answer the door in an emergency. We're offering the boxes free of charge for as long as the resident needs it. The initial nine boxes went out immediately. We're looking for funding to secure some additional boxes through a sponsorship program being developed," shared Chief Murphy.

In addition to the Knox-Box key boxes, the department has begun to distribute "File of Life" information packets to residents, including those who participate in the residential box program. The File of Life contains a card where

a resident can record their medical conditions and medical history, as well as a second, smaller version to be carried in a purse or wallet. The card is placed in a sleeve which attaches magnetically to the refrigerator. With the Residential Box Program, the department is recommending residents with medical conditions complete a File of Life and keep it posted to the refrigerator. When arriving at a residence for an emergency call, responders look for the File of Life on the refrigerator. The medical history and conditions listed on the file assist responders in providing a timely assessment of medical information during an emergency.

By implementing the Residential Knox Box Program and the File of Life, Allen Park is realizing its mission to provide the highest level of life safety to its citizens.



Community Effort

Continued from page 2

grocery stores and various social functions in the Sedona Verde Valley area. "These lock boxes make wonderful gifts," noted Ziller. "Children have sponsored lock boxes for their parents."

The "Lock Boxes for Seniors" program is an Arizona initiative, which began in Scottsdale by Scottsdale Area Association of REALTORS and spread throughout the state. SVVAR's program is the first in Northern Arizona. SVVAR began fundraising for the program in February and has received donations from individuals, businesses and real estate professionals. "All the emergency response systems throughout the Verde Valley are cooperating with one another to make this program happen," says Ziller. "Gary Johnson at the Sedona Fire Department has been instrumental in helping me with the project." The SVVAR has 972 members.

Locking FDC Plug Maintenance Recommendations

Locking FDC plugs should be inspected by a qualified inspector on an annual basis to ensure that the connection and the locking plug are in operating order.

When a FDC system is back flushed for clean out, all of the Knox® FDC Plugs must be removed so that contaminated water and debris will not flood the plugs and cause contamination problems. This is especially important if the sprinkler system has developed microbial infestation.

Knox FDC Plugs are not designed to function as pressure-seal plugs for wet systems. If the check valve upstream is defective and leaks water, the water will go through the plug to show leakage. The defective check valve must then be repaired.

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KNOX NEWS

2006 Tradeshow Schedule

AFSA	Dallas	TX	Sept 7-8
WA Fire Marshals	Kennewick	WA	Sept 12-15
IAFC	Dallas	TX	Sept 15-18
Island Conference & Expo	Hempstead	NY	Sept 22-24
Iowa Fire Convention	Cedar Falls	IA	Sept 23-24
Alaska Fire Chiefs	Fairbanks	AK	Sept 25-30
California Fire Chiefs	Riverside	CA	Oct 1-4
Illinois Fire Chiefs	Peoria	IL	Oct 16-18
Minnesota Fire Chiefs	St Cloud	MN	Oct 19-22
Colorado EMS	Keystone	CO	Nov 3-4
Assoc. Fire Districts NY	Ellenville	NY	Nov 2-5
Florida Fire Marshal's Annual Mtg	Marathon Key	FL	Nov 5-9
Campus Fire Forum	Chapel Hill	NC	Nov 7-9
Fire Rescue	Las Vegas	NV	Nov 9-13
Illinois Fire Inspectors	Countryside	IL	Nov 16-18
Hawaii Fire Chiefs	Waikoloa	HI	Nov 16-18
Colorado Fire Chiefs	Breckenridge	CO	Nov 30 - Dec 2

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.

What's NEW at KNOX



1-1/2" Locking FDC Plug

The Knox Company has a new 1-1/2" vandal-resistant locking plug to compliment its current line of locking FDC products. The Knox 1-1/2" plug is designed for use on fire sprinkler systems in residential occupancies. This new plug is secured by the Knox Keywrench, the same wrench used on the 2-1/2" plug. No new tools required.



Multi-purpose Electrical Switch



A new multi-purpose electrical switch is now available. This toggle switch is used to unlock electrical doors, gates and other electrical equipment that are controlled by a low voltage circuit. The switch can be connected to most electric doors, including Maglock type locks. Available as an option on the 3200 and 4400 series lock boxes, the switch can also be retrofitted on to existing 3200 Series boxes purchased since April 2002 and 4400 Series vaults purchased since January 2003.



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