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Route To:

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

Westminster Fire Department, Colorado



Fire Captain Neil Rosenberger has been with the Westminster, Colorado Fire Department for over 25 years, and has been involved with Westminster's Knox® Program for about 15 years. Back at the beginning of Westminster's Knox program, an ordinance was passed requiring "any building with an alarm or sprinkler system to have a box," shared Rosenberger. Over the years, this requirement has become retro active and now all buildings with alarms or sprinkler systems must have a box. During inspections, the fire department even suggests those without an alarm or sprinkler system, consider installing a box. While they are not required to have the box, the fire department explains how much more convenient it is for the department to have the box available. "Once the benefits to the fire department are explained, most have chosen to have a box installed," said Rosenberger.

Over the years, Rosenberger found the contents in the Knox-Box® key boxes were disorganized. "I noticed the information in the boxes was not organized. It wasn't very helpful the way it was stored," stated Rosenberger. As a result, Rosenberger developed a Knox Make-Up Kit to organize all the boxes in a consistent manner.

After developing the make-up kit and getting buy-in from the department, Rosenberger conducted an in-service training session on how to utilize the kit, and then supplied each apparatus with its



Engineer Dooley checking Knox-Box.

own kit. Those inspecting and/or utilizing the boxes now use these kits to bring each box up to the same standard. The kit contains color-coded key tags, the Knox Fire Department Reflective Alert Decals, extra key hooks, permanent markers and pens. Westminster's ordinance requires there to be a key for every locked door in the building. To help firefighters easily identify which keys go to what doors, they have color-coded the key tags as follows:

Red Key Tag – Alarm panel/control or fire room

Green Key Tag – Egress key

Yellow Key Tag – Auxiliary key – such as utility room

White Key Tag – generic

Extra hooks are contained in the kit

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Editorial

This winter edition is packed with information to get you started on the right foot in 2006. Articles include information on tamper switches, requesting additional keys, order forms, ordinances and much more.

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



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West Des Moines Fire Department



Kent Eubanks started with West Des Moines, Iowa Fire Department as a volunteer fire fighter in 1971. In 1973, he took a job with the Des Moines Airport as a Career firefighter as well as being a volunteer firefighter. In 1986 Kent became the first Fire Marshal in the history of West Des Moines Fire Department. When he became the fire marshal, West Des Moines was still a volunteer department, the fire

through the Assistance to the Firefighter Grant Program. We asked for money for some locking FDC's and a fire safety trailer. They weren't willing to fund the trailer but were willing to give us the bigger request of the two, the locking FDC plugs. We received \$101,000 for FDC plugs," Eubanks stated.

Eubanks added, "The city council has been very supportive of the FDC program and gave us the 10% match required by the Grant Program. The FDC plugs are



Firefighter Dave Francis and Fire Marshal Kent Eubanks.

chief, secretary and new fire marshal were the only career staff. Shortly afterwards, they started to add career positions. Today West Des Moines is a combination department with 38 career staff and 70 volunteers.

"We adopted the Knox® System in 1987 because we had keys coming out of our ears. There were two companies that made the boxes at the time. One company had a lower price, but Knox's boxes were UL listed. We decided to go with the UL listed product. Over the course of the years, Knox has taken care of us," Eubanks said.

"In 2004, we applied for a grant

required in our code."

"We looked at having a sprinkler contractor handle the installation of the FDC plugs, but it was potentially going to cost more to the building owner to have systems flushed and plugs installed then the cost of the actual plugs. So we used one of our volunteer firefighters, Dave Frances, to install all the caps," commented Eubanks.

"Frances inspected each system prior to installing the plug. If there appeared to be junk in the standpipe, he would suck out the debris with a wet vac donated by the local Home Depot. He found

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West Des Moines...

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Fire Marshal Kent Eubanks.

approximately 4-5 systems that were impacted and did require a back flush by a sprinkler contractor,” Eubanks explained.

“Another benefit of having a firefighter install all the plugs was we found out that some of the connections had the wrong threads. If we had had a fire at those locations, our hoses would not have been able to connect,” said Eubanks.

Frances installed 801 plugs throughout the city. While he was completing the installations, he wrote down the system type and year of installation for each system so West Des Moines would have a database

of all systems. To assist with any potential objections to the locking plugs by the business owners, Eubanks developed a letter that laid out what the fire department was doing and how the plugs were obtained with the grant money. The only issue they ran into was trying to locate some business owners. None of the plugs were installed without first talking with the business owner. Some business owners were more

difficult to track down than others.

With the city council paying the 10% match required by the grant, the majority of business owners did not have to lay out any money for the locking FDC plugs to be installed. The only exception was for those businesses that had impacted systems or connections with the wrong threads. These businesses were required to complete the necessary maintenance to bring their system up to code. Going forward all new businesses are required to have plugs installed to receive an occupancy permit. The grant only covered

existing businesses.

Many of the systems had chrome caps, after installing the FDC plugs the fire department gave the business the option of keeping the chrome caps themselves or donating them to the fire department. The fire department is going to scrap the chrome caps and put the money towards fire prevention programs. The majority of the owners chose to donate their chrome caps.

West Des Moines did have some funds left over and chose to use these funds to purchase additional products that would enhance their Knox program.

In West Des Moines the Fire and EMS departments are separate and do not use the same key. “To help the EMS department with their calls, we have installed Sentralok® key retention units in the ambulances with the fire key. This will allow both Fire and EMS to access all Knox-Box® key boxes in the city. It’s much easier to use Sentralok since dispatch tones out a code to unlock the key. It gives us more control of who has access to the key. The request is logged in at dispatch via a request over the radio system,” Eubanks stated.

West Des Moines has a population of 52,000 and is a suburb of Des Moines, Iowa. They participate in mutual aid with all the surrounding departments. In particular, they work very closely with the West Metro Fire Department’s, Clive and Urbandale. These three departments try to have the same SOP’s, fire codes and use the same training academy. This allows them to all be on the same page and easily move between the departments.

“We believe in Knox Products. Knox provides very good service over the years. If there is an issue, they immediately take care of it,” Eubanks shared. 



Local Ordinances: The Power of the Legislature



To most of us, when we hear the word “legislature”, our minds go to Washington DC and images of wheeling and dealing, lobbyists, filibusters and the game of politics. Generally, we see these legislators as being far away and not having too much impact on our daily

local officials the message is simple: There is tremendous, usually untapped power in your local legislature. Put it to work for your community and the citizens you serve.

What can legislation do?

Model fire, building, and electrical codes exist because the combined

the recommendations of the local official and turn the codes into law.

Historical Perspective

In the long history of fire prevention & protection in America, there have been many occasions where fire and life safety officials have taken major steps to enhance the level of survivability of occupants in a fire scenario by passing ordinances requiring that business owners make substantial changes to existing structures and occupancies. Unfortunately, most of these changes have come as a result of catastrophic high-fatality fires that prompted a public outcry. History is full of examples. The “Shirtwaist Factory Fire”, the “Coconut Grove Night Club” and the “MGM Fire” all resulted in significant changes being made to both new construction and to existing structures. Some fire officials will say that they do not have the authority to require these changes to older, existing structures. History does not support this position. As we have seen in the aftermath of the devastating hurricanes that ravished the Gulf Coast this past summer, local officials are just one major incident away from public scrutiny and being forced to make major changes. Historical events, coupled with the trend toward aggressive action by forward-thinking code officials and fire marshals, has led to the concept of passing local ordinances with a retrofit component that addresses issues relating to public safety to lessen the loss of life and property damage. It is vitally important that fire officials proactively recognize changing trends and work to make buildings safer and more survivable.

Ordinance vs. Policy Statement

Because the process is arduous and perceived complex, some fire officials will



lives. What we sometimes fail to realize is that the local government and legislature, be it a city council or county board has the most significant impact on our daily lives. It may be in the direct form of a ‘No Parking’ or ‘No Smoking’ ordinance or ‘Community Development’ laws. Local city councils or commissioners courts have the ability to make radical changes in the way a community operates and how we live our lives. Many communities will have ordinances that focus on parking issues or the length of a dog leash, but will fail to address issues related to life safety and survivability. This is where the legislature becomes a powerful tool that fire and code officials can use to implement change and deliver a higher level of service to the citizens. To those

experience and knowledge of professionals in a vast number of disciplines have come together to address the issues and set minimum expectable standards. The codes are the minimum acceptable standards used for new construction and the continued maintenance of fire and life safety. While these recognized standards are useful, they, in and of themselves, are of little value until the local legislative body in a community gives them life and puts them in force. The local fire chief or fire marshal cannot do it. What the local official does is present the total package, both the model code and the amendments that are appropriate to the jurisdiction, to the legislature for consideration. In every case, some level of legislature, either at the state or local level will have to anoint

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Local Ordinances...

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attempt to make changes to the code by instituting a Policy Statement and making the desired change. For example, they will determine that fire lanes need to be expanded, or fire extinguisher service intervals need to be adjusted. While this may be acceptable in the short run, or when there are unique circumstances, like a temporary burn ban, it is questionable if it is even within the power of the executive branch (fire marshal) to both set standards and enforce them as law without legislative review and consent. That is where an ordinance becomes a powerful tool. As the word implies, the ordinance is 'ordained' by the legislature and has the full weight and support of the city. It promotes consistency and uniformity in your fire prevention and code enforcement. A local policy statement may be challenged and brought before an appeals board or the courts if a citation is issued for noncompliance. It may be possible for the policy to be challenged as being strictly the opinion of the fire official and not necessarily a recognized standard. If that same policy had been adopted into the city's Code of Ordinances by the local legislature, then the requirements are recognized as being

the 'will of the people' and are more easily enforced and defended.

Emerging needs

As communities grow and emerging needs arise, new standards will need to be implemented and adopted to meet the demand. Understanding how the legislative system works and the keys to success is vitally important in implementing these requirements to the community. The power of the legislature is available to you. While it can be complex, it is also the most effective way to make long-term sustainable improvements to your community. Adopting a local ordinance that addresses the public safety concerns in your community will demonstrate consistency and will make it easy for those affected to comply. The power is available to you. Learn about the process, become involved.

Requesting More Master Keys

In line with Knox key security policies, fire department requests for more master keys must be written on department letterhead, signed by an authorized signer and mailed to the Knox Company.

Please mail the original letter when making key requests. We cannot accept faxes or copies when you are requesting keys. In addition, keys are shipped to your department's physical address via FedEx and requires a signature acknowledging receipt. Please provide your street address rather than a post office box.

Thank you for helping us maintain Knox® Master Key security. 



Westminster Fire Department

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Westminster Fire Department at a Knox-Box inspection.

because some business owners have actually removed the hooks not knowing they were to hold the keys. "The kit is pretty simple. It has everything needed to keep the box updated," explained Rosenberger.

"Sometimes when we answer a call, we discover the box isn't in a convenient location. We will suggest they add another box to a different door," said Rosenberger. "We're thinking of including a card with the Knox website address to give to business owners who need to update their boxes instructions on how to order on line." (Knox has developed an on-line order card for no signature-required departments. To

order, please contact Knox Fire Customer Service – 800-566-9269.) "This will allow these businesses to more easily order the extra box," shared Rosenberger.

"The make-up kit has helped tremendously with getting the front line people to buy into the program. They see that the boxes are out there to help us. The make-up kit is used on inspections and has become a habit," commented Rosenberger.

During their inspection of the boxes, they noticed that one "business" had a problem with the keys being accurate. This business was the Jefferson County



Fire inspection make-up kit.

School System, one of the largest in Colorado with 160 schools. While each school had a Knox-Box key box, many of the keys in the boxes were not current. As a school would update their locks, they were not contacting the fire department to have the keys

in their key boxes updated. To help resolve this problem, the Westminster Fire Department adopted the dual lock boxes for the schools. The top lock is reserved for the fire department while the bottom lock is reserved for the school security officer. To help keep everyone who accesses the boxes accountable, a log is contained inside each box. Whenever the box is opened by the school security officer, they must log who and when the box was accessed. Since switching to the dual lock boxes, "we've been able to keep the keys straight. Keys are now accurate, in the past that wasn't the case," commented Rosenberger. While the dual lock option is not for everyone, it has worked well with the school system.

The Westminster fire dept started in 1934 as an all-volunteer department. During the early 1970's they hired their first career fire fighter and started the transition to a full career department. Their last volunteer retired 4 years ago. They have 6 stations and 5 ambulances. The ambulances are staffed with cross-trained firefighters/paramedics.

Westminster is located midway between Boulder and Denver. With a population of 108,000, it is a community with a mixture of high tech industry, retail and residences. A few years ago the community's voters approved a tax increase to fund public safety. Now every ten cents of \$10 dollars in sales tax is dedicated to public safety. This money is split between the police and fire departments. Having this money has given both departments the ability to hire additional staff and fund equipment needs. It has also given peace of mind to those working in the departments that money for their programs will be there.

Westminster has taken their Knox Program and adapted it to fit their community's needs. Their program has grown and evolved right along with their community.



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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 web site for updates on a regular basis. If you have not updated the KeySecure Software or Firmware in the past 4 months, 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

Virginia Fire Chiefs	Virginia Beach	VA	Feb 24-25
Washington Training Conf	Wenatchee	WA	Feb 28
Southwest Fire Rescue	Austin	TX	Mar 11-16
CA Fire Prevention Institute	Santa Ynez Valley	CA	Mar 15
KS State Capital Area FF Association Fire School	Topeka	KS	Mar 16-18
Texas IAAI Conference	Austin	TX	Mar 19-21
Maine Fire Protection Services	Augusta	ME	Mar 21-22
Campus Fire Safety Conference	Columbus	OH	Apr 3-5
Oregon Fire Chiefs	Redmond	WA	Apr 6-9
SMAFC	Taylor	MI	Apr 13
GovSec	Washington	DC	Apr 26-27
FDIC 2006	Indianapolis	IN	Apr 27-29
Georgia Fire Chiefs	St. Simons Island	GA	Apr 28-May 1

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.**

Tamper Switches

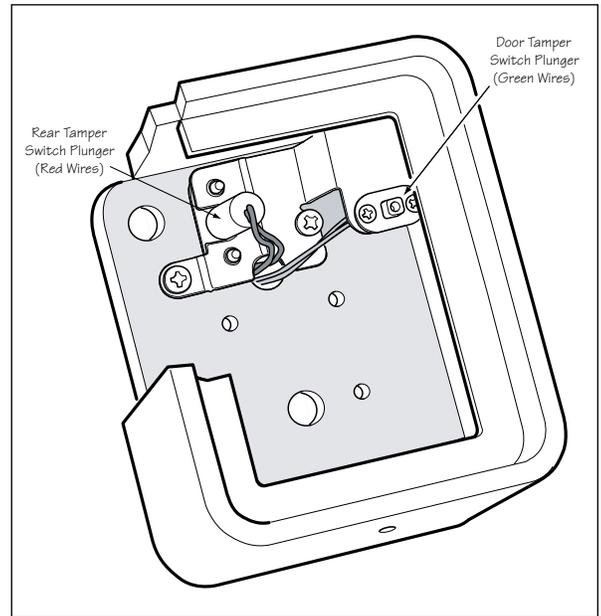
Tamper switches add another layer of security to already attack resistant Knox® products by having the building alarm system monitor any activity that occurs with a Knox-Box® key box. These switches will alleviate property owner concern about unauthorized entry and use of building keys. Tamper switches are available on nearly all models of Knox products.

The “tamperers” are pre-installed at the factory and are easy to connect to a building alarm system. Do not connect a tamper switch to the fire alarm. The “tamperers” detect movement of a Knox-Box door and the attempted removal of the box from its mounting. In the past few years security has become a major concern for businesses. As a result, we have seen a steady increase in the request for tamper switches.

The Knox Company highly recommends that boxes be ordered with tamper switches even if the end user currently does not have a security alarm system. This gives the property owner the option to connect the box to the building alarm system when one is installed rather than having to retrofit their existing box with a tamper switch at a later date.

Tamper Switch Installation instructions are included with each product. Our tech support is also available to provide some assistance by calling 866-566-9269. All products with tamperers should be installed per the product’s installation instructions.

When installing the tamper switch assembly, make sure that it is connected



to the burglar alarm, not the fire alarm. A qualified alarm installer should perform alarm wiring and testing. 



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