



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

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## Inside



Editorial  
Switching to Knox P. 2

Knox-Box® Lending Program P.3

Local Ordinances:  
The Power of Legislature P. 4

Knox News  
Contacts  
Tradeshaw Schedule P. 7

Knox Master Key P. 8

### Route To:

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

## Secure in Portage



Fire Marshal Fred Byrnes, of the Portage Michigan Fire Department, is responsible for plan reviews and inspections for both new construction and remodels of commercial buildings. Working closely with many of the community's architects and builders, he makes sure they understand the fire codes that are enforced within their community.

"We are very proactive with our fire prevention programs. In addition to reviewing all building plans and inspecting the fire protection equipment being installed at the time of construction, we also inspect the buildings and their equipment on an annual basis to make sure everything is in working order. We're also very active within the community and our schools with public educational programs focusing on fire prevention," Byrnes said.

Back in the early 1980's, Portage first began requiring key boxes on all newly constructed or remodeled commercial buildings. "All buildings being constructed had to have a Knox-Box® key box on them. In 2004, the requirement for boxes became retroactive. All businesses were required to install a Knox-Box key box," Byrnes stated.

The requirement for a box was not limited

to just alarmed or sprinkler buildings. It is for every commercial building. Byrnes explained, "Everything of a commercial nature is required to have a box including churches, schools and apartments. For larger buildings that have multiple entrances, a box must be installed at strategic entry points for fire operations."



Fire Marshal Fred Byrnes and Fire Chief Randy Lawton.

In further explanation, Byrnes added, "Our inability to access buildings where we've got a fire alarm or someone thinks they see smoke and we can't confirm has lead to requiring boxes on all commercial buildings - not just those that are sprinkler based. Without the key box, we would have to force entry or we'd wait until the key holder arrived. This was too much of a drain on our resources. It essentially takes a crew out of service while we wait for the key holder."

In addition to the key boxes, Portage also has incorporated KeySecure® Master

*Continued Page 6*

# Editorial

This spring edition takes us to three communities that have tailored their Knox Program to meet their community's needs. We also take a look at risk assessment and why it's important for departments to be proactive in assessing their risks.

Springtime also kicks off the busiest four months of tradeshows for Knox. Hopefully we'll see you at a show in your part of the country, so check the schedule on page 7.

We normally send one copy of the newsletter to each department but if you would like more people included or would like the newsletter delivered to each station, please let me know and we'll make it happen!



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# Switching to Knox



*Fire Prevention Officer Rick Russell, Fire Marshal Matt Mitchell, and Fire Inspector Nick Snyder.*

**D**ivision Chief, Fire Marshal Matt Mitchell has been with the Noblesville, Indiana Fire Department for 15 years. As fire marshal, he oversees the fire inspection division of the department that ensures structures are up to all building and fire codes adopted by the state and city through inspections and plan reviews. Fire Prevention Officer Rick Russell and Fire Inspector Nick Snyder work closely with Fire Marshal Mitchell to ensure the enforcement of all building fire codes and the safety of the community. During their site inspections, they utilize the key boxes to ensure they are in working order and contain the correct keys for the building.

While Noblesville has had a key box system in place for many years, it wasn't until 2003 that they adopted the Knox® System. Previously they were utilizing another company's key boxes. Noblesville decided to switch key systems based on a variety of reasons. "Based upon the quality of the products and range of products available through Knox, we decided to switch to the Knox System. Knox offers a far superior box in construction," shared Mitchell.

Prior to adopting the Knox System only the Fire Inspector and on-duty Battalion

Chief had a master key. "It's difficult when only two individuals have access. You have to make sure one of them is always present," commented Mitchell. "One of the reasons for switching to Knox was it had a master key retention device that provided the ability to track access. With KeySecure, we can distribute more master keys to more people. Now all officers have access to the Knox Master Key with their own PIN code and we can track their usage with the audit trail feature."

One drawback to switching lock box system was that the department now has two different master keys that it must carry. Noblesville overcame this small obstacle by devising a way to carry the master keys for both the Knox System and the previous system. Working with a local company, they had both systems' keys placed on a welded reinforced key ring that can't be cut. To ensure the security of the master keys, the Knox Master Key is locked into the KeySecure® unit. Since both keys are contained on the one key ring, to utilize either key the Knox Master Key must be released via a PIN code. All officers have their own unique PIN code.

*Continued Page 6*



# Knox-Box® Lending Program



Countryside Police Department, in the greater Chicago area, recently implemented a new community assistance program that benefits both Countryside residents and emergency responders. The police department frequently receives calls from a family member or neighbor inquiring about a resident that they have not been able to contact. They feel that the police should check on this person. In response to these calls, the Knox-Box® lending program was implemented for senior citizens and persons with special needs. With this new program, the police can check the home, and if they feel the situation warrants it, they can go inside to make sure everything is okay without having to break a window or door.

"We have a large senior population. If we had to get into a resident's home in an emergency situation, it was a problem," shared Chief Timothy Swanson.

Deputy Chief Paul Mallon added, "Four years ago, on Halloween, a neighbor reported that their elderly neighbor had not been seen recently. Their newspapers were piling up on the drive and mail was sticking out of the mailbox. As we walked around the house, we noticed legs when looking through a window. We broke the window to get inside and found the resident was deceased."

"If we knew the resident was in need of emergency service, we'd break into the home, causing damage to the property. Once inside, the officer would have to find a telephone number for a family member or neighbor. And then go through the medicine cabinet and bag all medicines for the paramedics to take to the hospital if transporting the resident. This takes a lot of time that could be better spent assisting the resident. Then if the property

could not be re secured, an officer would have to wait for someone to arrive to take control of the property. Chief Swanson had an idea for a better way to serve the community," Mallon commented.

"Chief Timothy Swanson came up with the idea for the File of Life program and wanted to go one step further to serve the community. With the support of the mayor and city council, he implemented the File of Life and Knox lending programs," Mallon said.



*Deputy Chief Paul Mallon.*

The File of Life is a card that residents complete with their emergency contact information, any medical conditions and all medicines they're currently taking. It's stored in a plastic pouch with a magnet and residents are asked to place the pouch on their refrigerator where it will be easily found by emergency responders. The File of Life ensures responders have the information on any pre-existing medical conditions or medical history that would be beneficial in the event of an emergency. Responders do not have to attempt to gather this information from a distressed patient.

To participate in the Knox lending program, citizens contact the police department. When a box is issued, the

resident must complete a registration form that is kept on file with the police department. This registration form contains the resident's basic information and any medical conditions and special needs. It also has their emergency contact information. "The program is at no charge to residents," shared Swanson.

"Originally the city purchased five boxes but they were gone at once. So we added five additional boxes for a total of ten boxes," Swanson stated. The boxes have worked well with the residents. The only issue they have encountered was with a few mobile park communities in town. The door hanger used to attach the box to the door does not allow the door to close due to a lip on the doorframe commonly found on mobile homes. Working with their local account manager, they came up with a solution to this problem. They installed a Knox-Vault™ key box outside the mobile park office. This one key box can store keys for multiple residents. Those within the park who wish to participate in the program, have their keys locked inside this vault rather than on their door. "The residents of the mobile home park love the program," Swanson said.

"Initially the program was for seniors and residents with special needs but we thought it was such a great program that we have expanded the program to all residents. There isn't a price on a person's safety," Swanson explained.

"The program has great backing by our city council. We will continue to buy more Knox-Box key boxes as long as there is a demand. It's been a great program," Swanson further explained.

Countryside is located in the greater Chicago land area in the west suburbs. It has a population of 6,700 and a daytime population of approximately 50,000. Countryside refers to itself as "Chicago's Western Gateway".

# Managing Risk in the Twenty-First Century



We all are at risk. Every person, every community, and every public safety organization. The events of 9/11 and the devastating storms that ravaged the Gulf coast last year have driven that point into the American consciousness. Professional Risk and Emergency Managers have known

with some level of peace and security. For the government, it is essential that every reasonable step be taken to protect the lives and property of the citizens they are sworn to serve. One of the leaders in the current trends of modern risk management is Peter Bernstein. In his book *Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk*, Bernstein states that for most of American

safety organization. In a speech to the nation on September 15, 2005, after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita had left more than 1300 dead and millions without a home, President Bush stated, "Our cities must have clear and up-to-date plans for responding to natural disasters, disease outbreaks, or terrorist attack. I consider detailed emergency planning to be a national security priority." This concept is so important that the government has made risk assessment a required component of Department of Homeland Security's Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) grant program. To qualify for a fire prevention grant, departments must regularly conduct risk assessments and analyze risk. From the [2005 Program Guidance for Fire Prevention and Safety Grants](#): "Applications that establish their project scope based upon risk assessments will receive the highest consideration. A risk assessment can be conducted through a formal or informal methodology; however, the methodology should be discussed in the application (narrative). Applications that are not based on an assessment, are not requesting funding for an assessment, or do not describe a completed assessment in their application (narrative) will receive the lowest consideration." The instructions are clear. If you want federal dollars, you must actively prepare for otherwise unforeseen contingencies.



this fact for a long time. Natural disasters are on the rise. Predictions are that the 2006 Hurricane season could be worse than 2005. Instances of both civil and man-made events are also on the rise. Terms like Threat Evaluation and Consequence Management are becoming part of the language of the Fire Service. The real measure of how effective any public safety organization functions will be measured by how they recognize and prepare for current threats and their ability to react to emerging needs.

## Risk in The New Millennium

Risk management utilizes the notion that if we use a consistent logical approach to identifying potential threats and employ a disciplined approach to mitigating the threat, we can face life's uncertainties

history we have relied on the concepts of "Faith and Luck" as the cornerstones of our efforts to manage risk. As Bernstein puts it "If everything is a matter of luck, risk management is a meaningless exercise. Invoking luck obscures truth, because it separates an event from its cause." It is clear today that we must all take a hard look at risk and vulnerability in our community. We should assess our strengths and weakness and look for tools that can help us protect our community and resources.

## Mandate From the Federal Government

President Bush has referred to First Responders as America's Frontline Soldiers. Homeland security and our ability to recognize and manage risks is becoming mandatory for any public

## Steps to Risk Assessment/ Hazard Mitigation

Risk assessment is broadly defined as the process of analyzing threats and vulnerabilities, the potential impacts, and identifying resources and capabilities. The resulting findings are used as a basis for identifying appropriate mitigation techniques, upgrading equipment and

*Continued Page 5*

# Managing Risk...

Continued from page 5



instituting training and procedures to meet the contingency. Here are some practical steps to conducting a risk assessment.

**1. Identify the hazards.** This will include an analysis of potential scenarios and threats. Is there an identified haz-mat route through your jurisdiction? Do you have a major sporting complex? After you identify the potential risks, focus on the likely threats. Once you have identified the potential hazards, and the likely events, you can develop a threat matrix that focuses on your vulnerabilities and resources you can rely on to meet the threat.

**2. Determine who is at the most risk in your community.** Do you have retirement communities, state institutions, hospitals or any other special population groups that would be uniquely vulnerable? Do you have a community evacuation plan in case of a haz-mat or weather related event? Before you can make any decisions on how to respond, you must first be able to identify what groups are at a particular disadvantage should a catastrophic event occur.

**3. Evaluate the Risks.** Now it's time to take your data and correlate the vulnerabilities and the available assets. Risks are

calculated by taking the events that pose the greatest danger and overlaying them on the expected or potential frequency. Experts suggest that the intent is not to cover every vulnerability, only those that pose the greatest risk to the community. "Vulnerability management is a matter of risk assessment as well as the ability to take a slice across an entire organization," advises Mitchell Ashley, chief technology officer of StillSecure, a network security company.

**4. Develop an Action Plan.** Review your current plans and modify them as needed. Once your vulnerabilities and assets have been identified, and the risks assessed, you have to decide what action you can take. What can be done to mitigate or completely block the risks? Is the leadership team, including elected officials prepared to function at a high level under extreme circumstances? Do you have multiple layers of trained personnel that can function for long periods of time? Do you need additional training? Can the most vulnerable systems be fixed immediately, or do you need modifications to both the infrastructure and the organization?

Once you have done your assessment and made the appropriate modifications to

the system, document your findings and set up a program to regularly test the system and evaluate your progress. Once your system is completely ready, your people trained and your plans fully implemented, it is time to start the process over again.

## Conclusion

Proactive risk management is a vital part of the delivery of service for fire departments in the twenty-first century. Minimizing these risks will take on many forms. It will take a total effort of all of your available resources to meet the challenges. One of the lessons that we have learned over the past few years is that no fire department in America, no matter how big, can manage all the aspects of a major catastrophe by themselves. Use unconventional methods to meet emerging threats. Utilize volunteer groups like Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) or other Citizen Corps groups to assist you. Strengthen and update your mutual aid agreements. Look for areas of vulnerability and implement programs or legislative changes to meet current needs. The days of relying on the concepts of "faith and luck" alone are over. Individuals and communities must analyze their surroundings, identify potential threats, and take positive proactive steps to lessen the damaging impact.





# Secure in Portage

Continued from page 1



Fire Marshal Byrnes retrieving Knox master key from KeySecure®.

Key Retention Devices into their Knox® Program. All responding vehicles, including the staff cars, have the KeySecure units to ensure the security of the master key. In order to open a Knox-Box, an officer first has to have the master key released via their PIN number. All officers have their own unique PIN code. The KeySecure unit tracks all access to the key based upon these PIN codes allowing the department to see when the keys were released and by whom.

As with most departments, Portage has had a few business owners who were skeptical about installing a key box on their building and handing their key over to the fire department. "We've had a few objections," shared Byrnes. "After explaining the reasons as to why we use the boxes, most are convinced of their importance."

"I have been asked by a few business owners how do we know the master key is secure. I then demonstrate how KeySecure works for them. Usually this convinces them of the integrity of the system," Byrnes explained.

Portage is a mixed community of industry, commercial and residential properties. Within their jurisdiction are several large facilities. In particular, there is one facility - Pfizer. While Pfizer Pharmaceuticals has their own firefighting brigade and a very comprehensive fire prevention program, Portage still responds to all their calls and operates under a unified command during fire responses to the facility.

Located in Southwestern Michigan adjacent to Kalamazoo, Portage Fire Department serves a community of 46,000 out of 3 stations with 35 career and 18 paid on call members. "The Knox-Box key box saves time and prevents property damage. We don't have to force any doors or break windows to see if there is really smoke or fire in the building or what actually is causing the alarm to sound," Byrnes commented.


# Noblesville...

Continued from page 2

The KeySecure unit tracks all access to the key based upon these PIN codes allowing the department to see who and when the keys were released.

Another reason for changing systems was the hinged door option of the Knox product. "The competitive product didn't have a hinged door. We now require hinged doors on all new key boxes. It's a lot more user friendly for the firefighter, especially at 3 a.m. Most contractors installing the lift off doors didn't secure the door to the chain so the doors ended up falling to the ground," Mitchell shared.

Those using the previous system are not required to change out their boxes just because the city changed systems. They are only required to change their key box if there is a change of occupancy or a renovation of the building. "If a building has a change of occupancy, they must update the key box to a Knox-Box. We emphasize the quality of the Knox-Box opposed to the box they currently have," said Mitchell. Noblesville has not encountered any resistance to updating during these instances once they see the difference in quality.

Located just north of Indianapolis, Noblesville serves a community of 40,000. With a full career department of 110 personnel working from 6 fire stations, it was recently named the fastest growing city in Indiana. "We are experiencing phenomenal growth," stated Mitchell. 



# Knox Contacts

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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

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
Idaho Fire Chiefs	Garden City	ID	May 4-5
Fire Expo 2006	Harrisburg	PA	May 19-21
Northwest Fire & Rescue	Portland	OR	May 19-20
Winnebago Co. Fire Chiefs	Rockford	IL	May 24
NFPA	Orlando	FL	June 4-9

## 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.**

# Knox® Master Key

The Knox Master Key is a high security key with many security features built into the actual key. Normally you should not encounter any problem with your Knox Master Key, particularly if it is kept in a master key retention device. Unfortunately, not everyone utilizes a master key retention device. This leaves master keys vulnerable to additional wear and tear. Due to the security features of the key, additional wear and tear on the key can result in difficulty in the locking and unlocking of a Knox box.

The Knox Company recommends you test your existing master keys on a regular basis to ensure they operate correctly. If you encounter a master key that does not consistently open a box, we suggest you follow the steps below to determine if it is the master key that is damaged or if the lock core has been contaminated with grit.

1. Try three, or more, different master keys to determine if it's the key or the keyway.
2. If all keys have difficulty opening the box, it is most likely an issue of the lock core having been contaminated with grit. Complete the annual maintenance steps

listed below and retry the keys.

## Medeco Lock Annual Maintenance

- Spray lock mechanism with a dry Teflon lubricant such as Key Lube or LPS-1.
- Do not use oil-based products such as WD40.
- Operate lock several times to check operation and spread lubricant.

If the lock still does not open consistently, perform the following procedure:

- Spray the lock cylinder generously with a good carburetor cleaner such as Gum Out, PoxyLube or LPS-1. These products leave no residue that may interfere with the moving parts of the lock.
- Take the Knox master key and work it in and out of the lock several times.
- Spray the lock cylinder with a dry Teflon lubricant a second time.
- With a rubber mallet lightly tap the lock (if rubber mallet unavailable, place a piece of wood against the lock core and lightly tap it with a wrench or hammer). This sends a vibration through the lock core to help free the pins.
- Re-try all three keys. If all three keys still experience problems, contact Knox


Fire Service at 1-866-566-9269.

3. If one or more keys function properly, i.e. have no difficulty in opening the box, then the keys that have difficulty are most likely damaged and need to be replaced.

In line with Knox key security policies, fire department requests for master keys must be written on department letterhead, signed by an authorized signer and mailed to the Knox Company. In the letter please state that you are replacing a damaged master key.

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 require a signature acknowledging receipt. Please provide your street address rather than a post office box.

The original master key being replaced must be returned to the Knox Company for evaluation. Once our evaluation is complete, the key will be destroyed.

Again, problems with the master key are very rare. To reduce the likelihood of there being a problem, the Knox Company highly recommends you store your master key in a master key retention device. 



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