

5.09 Lock Box Program Guidelines for New and Replacement Boxes (2024)

REFERENCE: 2022 San Francisco Fire Code, Section 506.2.1

PURPOSE: This administrative bulletin describes the San Francisco Fire Department's Lock Box program. Lock boxes are hardened security steel vaults mounted on the exterior of buildings to store access keys for exclusive use by authorized fire department personnel to gain afterhours access quickly and efficiently at unattended buildings. Use of lock boxes reduces the necessity to damage buildings through the use of forcible entry.

SCOPE: The San Francisco Fire Code authorizes the fire department to require the installation of lock boxes at the following occupancy types, unless a written exemption from the Fire Marshal has been provided:

“H” - Hazardous: New and Existing

“L” - Laboratory : New and Existing

“B” - Business Laboratories: testing and research

In all other occupancy types (*A, B, I, S, F, M, U, High-rise*) installation is recommended, but not required.

- I. **Approved Product:** Effective September 21, 2024, the approved lock box includes the eKey versions of the KnoxBox® 3200 and KnoxVault® 4400, manufactured by the Knox Company. Both recessed and surface mount models are approved for installation. Knox Tamper Alert is optional.
- II. **How it Works:** The building representative (owner, facility manager, etc.) installs, or contracts for installation, the lock box on the exterior of the designated building, locating it in close proximity to the main entrance. Access into the KnoxBox® and the KnoxVault requires the insertion of an electronic key that requires a PIN code to be entered before it can be opened. **NOTE:** Boxes can ONLY be unlocked and locked by authorized San Francisco Fire Department personnel with a Knox eKey®.
- III. **Obtaining a Lock Box:** Lock boxes can be purchased online at **KnoxBox.com** or by calling Knox directly at: 1-800-566-9269.
- IV. **Installing a Lock Box:** All boxes MUST be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended installation instructions near the main entrance of the building (within 10 feet of either side of the door). The process is different for each mounting option. The suggested minimum and maximum mounting height is not less than four (4) feet and not more than six (6) feet above adjacent ground.
 - 1) **White SFFD reflective sticker** - Place on the lock box door/cover such that it does not obscure the serial number.
 - 2) **Red Knox sticker** – Place on the upper right or left side of the main entrance door, signifying which side of the entrance the lock box is installed.
- V. **Keys and Key Marking:** It is the responsibility of the building owner or their designated representative to purchase and label the keys to be placed in the KnoxBox® in accordance with the list below:

- Main Entrance Key: **GREEN** (*Note* - for security purposes, this key should NOT be the master key to all doors in the building)
- Fire Alarm Cabinet, Fire Control Room, or Building Control Station Key: **RED** (These keys are required when a fire alarm system is installed or for the Fire Control Room in high-rise buildings)
- Elevator Recall Keys: **YELLOW** (When the building has an elevator with an elevator recall function)
- Firefighter Air System Cabinets or Rooms: **ORANGE** (If the building has a firefighter air system)
- Sprinkler Shutoff Room: **BLUE** (When a sprinkler system exists in the building.)

VI. **Lock Box Key Placement:** Once the Lockbox has been installed, and the keys have been properly labeled, contact the fire department to complete the installation process.

The building representative shall do the following:

- 1) Download and complete a **Request to Activate** form at: <https://sf-fire.org/services/sffd-lockbox-program> , or visit the San Francisco Fire Department at: 698 Second Street, Room 109, to obtain and complete the form. All requests must include payment for two (2) hours of inspection (see form for exact amount).

Payments shall be mailed or made in person at:

Lock Box Program
Bureau of Fire Prevention – San Francisco Fire Department
698 Second Street, Room 109, San Francisco, CA 94107

- 2) Call 415-558-3276 to schedule an inspection of the Lock Box installation.

VII. **Notification Requirements:** Whenever doors or cabinets are rekeyed, it is the responsibility of the building's designated representative to contact their district's fire inspector to have the new keys added to the designated Lock Box. There are no fees for this service.

Contact the Fire Department at 415-558-3300 to obtain the information needed to contact the appropriate district fire inspector.

Questions about the Knox Lock Box Program should be directed to the Lock Box Support Office: 415-558-3276.