

Home Key Safes Aid 1st Responders

By *Chief B. Michael Thurlow*

For several years the Scarborough Fire Department, and many other departments, have adopted a program where businesses voluntarily place a key safe on their commercial properties.



The program has worked so well for commercial properties over the years the Knox Company, which makes the commercial key safes, has now expanded the program to a residential line of safes called HomeBox®. Knox HomeBoxes® can be installed directly to a home, or they have models that hang over a door that don't require fasteners or permanent mounting.

These safes are manufactured by the Knox Company, an American company that specializes in manufacturing these secure devices. Each community is assigned a unique Knox master key that opens all the safes installed in their community. Those master keys are kept in safes mounted in our fire apparatus for security purposes so they can only be accessed by first responders when needed to gain access to a home or business.

Providing first responders with a quick and secure way to make entry during a fire or a medical emergency when the patient may not be able to greet responders at the door can make a big difference in how that particular call goes when the call is urgent in nature. The key system also saves us from having to force entry which often causes damage to doors or windows when we need to make access.

Homeowners interested in exploring this option can log onto the Knox Company website at www.Knoxhomebox.com. Click on the Buy Now link, then go through the steps to select Scarborough as your community to find the options that are approved for use in our town and also to make sure it is keyed correctly to our Scarborough master key. Choose the mounting type and color of the safe you prefer and place your order.

If you have any questions feel free to call our business office at 883-4542, and we will help guide you through the process. Once your safe arrives, contact us at the same number above and we will send someone down to place a copy of your key in your safe so it will be available if we ever need it. We will also make a note in our computerized records management system in the dispatch center so responders will know in advance that you have a key box on your home and where it is located.

If you have any questions about this article or any fire department issue you may contact me at mthurl@ci.scarborough.me.us or 730-4201.