

Key Box Program

This popular program involves installing a residential key box to an occupant's main entrance to their residence. The key box is really a key safe (similar to a realtor's key box) which attaches to, or very nearby, the main entry door. The Fire Department has the only key for the key box and that key is secured in the fire apparatus. Inside the key box is the key to the resident's door.

Why is this program so effective and important? If you are a resident living alone or perhaps just happen to be at home alone and you have a medical emergency. Let us say you fall and break your hip or maybe experience a diabetic emergency or a stroke. Let us further imagine that this happens in the middle of the night or maybe in the early morning hours and your home is securely locked. Unfortunately, you have fallen and cannot get up or for whatever reason you cannot go unlock the door.

If you have a Lifeline emergency device or even a cell phone, you can call 911 for help. When the Fire Department arrives at your residence, if you do NOT have a key box, the firefighters are going to test every door and window looking for a means to gain entry without breaking down a door or busting out a window. If no doors or windows are found to be unlocked, the firefighters are going to force entry into your home causing damage which you or your insurance company will be responsible for repairing. This process could take as much as 5 minutes or more to accomplish. Depending on the emergency, you may not have an extra 5 minutes to spare.

Now let's imagine that you have this same medical emergency, however, you have a key box attached to your home. As the firefighters are dispatched to your home, the dispatcher has a record that you have a key box so he/she alerts the firefighters. While responding to your residence, the Officer in Charge secures the master key to the key box attached to your home. Upon arrival the firefighters proceed directly to your main entryway where the Officer in Charge opens the key box and retrieves the key to your main door. The key is used to open the door and the firefighters are immediately at your side providing possible life saving care without delay.

City of Decatur residents are eligible to participate in the key box program with a one time, non-refundable, **\$40.00**, administrative fee. This fee covers the lease, installation and eventual removal of the box for as long as a resident wants it. Payment must be received in full prior to key box installation. There are currently over 1000 residential key boxes installed in the City of Decatur.

If you or a family member are interested in obtaining a key box, call the Fire Station 1 at (217) 424-2811. Our office hours are Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The installation only takes about 5 minutes and can usually be scheduled within a day or two of calling. Make sure you have a working spare key for the door the key box is to be installed on.

