Fire Fighter Key Box Standard

Purpose:

The purpose of this standard is to enable building managers and owners to understand the emergency services requirements for buildings where it relates to providing the Fire Department keys/cards to gain access to respond to building fire alarms.

When is a Key Box Required?

As per Alberta Fire Code 2.5.1.3 a fire department key box shall be installed and provided with keys and devices in a building equipped with:

- A fire alarm system where control features, including those for emergency voice communication systems, are located behind a locked pane or panel,

- A fire alarm system where manually operated devices require a key or device in order to be reset,

- A fire alarm system where the electrical circuit breaker is located within a locked panel or room,

- An automatic sprinkler system where the main control valve is locked in the open position,

- Fire fighting standpipe and water supply connections in a locked room or area such as on a roof,

- A key operated elevator control feature that will permit exclusive use of elevators to firefighting personnel only,

- A key operated elevator control feature that will switch selected elevators to operate on emergency power,

- Stairway doors that have been locked on the stairway side in conformance with the Alberta Building Code, or

- Locked access doors to a roof provided for firefighting purposes.

A fire department key box constructed, keyed, and located in a manner acceptable to the Authority Having Jurisdiction shall be provided and shall contain a set or set of keys or devices required to be used in an emergency. It shall be installed on the exterior wall of the building in proximity to the principal entrance.

A number of locksmith companies have been approved to install and maintain these key boxes for buildings. It is the responsibility of the property to make the arrangements with the locksmith for installation and regular maintenance of these boxes. The only access to these boxes once installed is by the locksmith or Calgary Fire Department. Thus the responsibility for the safety of the key sets rests with these two (2) groups.

The key box will be installed on the exterior of the primary entrance to the location. This will allow the Calgary Fire Department to access the keys upon their entry to the building.

Building owners and/or managers wishing to install more than one key box at their location should there be more than one primary entrance are free to do so.

Although the above code requirements call for having a key box, an exception has been made by the Calgary Fire Department for complexes with 24-hour/365 day security located on site. In this circumstance the property must have security personnel meet the fire personnel upon their arrival with the necessary keys for their access. Where the property is unable to achieve this requirement then the Key Box is mandatory.

What Keys Need to be Included:

As per Alberta Fire Code 2.5.1.3 the following are the requirements for the keys provided to the Calgary Fire Department:

- Keys or devices provided shall be affixed to a key ring or rings, and identified with tags indicating their function.

- A key box installed on the exterior of a building shall contain an entrance door key with an identifying tag affixed to this key as per the above requirement.

To assist property owners in being able to create key sets for the fire fighters the following guidelines will apply:

- The primary keys needed by the Calgary Fire Department are listed below. These keys require identification that enable the fire fighters to quickly identify what the keys use is. The colors noted are an example only and the actual colors on the key tags can differ from these.

MASTER	Master Key
MAIN DOOR	Main Door
STAIRWELL/ROOF	Stairwell/Roof
MECH. ROOM	Mechanical Room
SPRINKLER	Sprinkler Room
FIRE ALARM	Fire Alarm
EMERG. GEN.	Emergency Generator
GARBAGE ROOM	Garbage Room
BLANK	Blank
ELEVATOR	Elevator

(Note: As the fire fighters will most likely need to leave the elevator key in the elevator cab, it is recommended that these keys be on a detachable key ring that allows the fire fighters to unclip it and leave it in the elevator.)

- In some cases one key can provide the access to many doors. This helps keep the total number of keys on a key set down to a manageable level for the fire fighters to use. Where this is the case the label for the keys should clarify this.

- It is recommended that a secured key ring be used to secure the keys to the set to prevent them from being removed.

- In certain cases a key to disarm or rearm magnetic locking devices should also be included on the set where applicable.

- Although one key set is required for a building, having additional key sets for the fire fighter use will aid them in their investigations. This is particularly important when multiple floors may be impacted by an alarm. Thus it is standard to have at minimum two (2) keys sets in a key box. If you do not have this then keys should be made available through security or maintenance to allow them additional access if needed.

- Consideration for having additional keys for Fire Fighter elevator control either attached to the sets or in an easily accessible location. During an actual fire all elevators could be used to transport equipment and thus more keys may be required.

Access Cards:

In many cases access cards or fobs can be used by the fire fighters to quickly access areas where a key could not. Access cards or fobs containing the required access can be attached to the key sets.

Access cards or fobs should be labelled just like the keys so that the fire fighters know what access is on the card.