

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

ORDINANCE NUMBER 14-01

COUNTY OF DORCHESTER

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, DORCHESTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, BY ADDING A SECTION TO CHAPTER 16, ARTICLE I, WHICH SHALL BE NUMBERED SECTION 16-1, TO PROVIDE FOR THE USE OF A KEY LOCK BOX TO ENABLE RAPID ENTRY TO A STRUCTURE BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT DURING AN EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, Dorchester County Council has determined that the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Dorchester County are promoted and safeguarded by requiring certain structures to have a key lock box installed on the exterior of the structure to aid Dorchester County Fire Rescue to gain access to the structure when the same is not occupied or when the occupants are unable to grant ingress to the Fire Department or Police Department; and

WHEREAS, the key lock box system will reduce the need for forced entry into structures and should avoid costly and time-consuming efforts in gaining access to locked structures during an emergency.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by Dorchester County Council, duly assembled as follows.

**SEC. 16-1.1 – PURPOSE**

Dorchester County Council has determined that the health welfare and safety of the citizens of Dorchester County are promoted by requiring certain structures in the unincorporated areas of Dorchester County to have a key lock box installed on the exterior of the structure to aid Dorchester County Fire Rescue in gaining access to or within a structure when responding to calls for an emergency service, and to aid access into or within a building that is secured or is unduly difficult to gain entry due to being either unoccupied or the occupants being unable to respond.

**SEC. 16-1.2 – KEY LOCKBOX SYSTEM**

1. The following structures in unincorporated Dorchester County shall be equipped with a key lock box at or near the main entrance or at such other location as required the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

- (a) Commercial or industrial structures.
- (b) Multi-family-residential structures that have restricted access through locked doors but have a common corridor for access to the living units
- (c) Schools, whether public or private.
- (d) Governmental structures and nursing care facilities unless the building is staffed or open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

2. All new structures as set forth in Section 16-1.2 above shall have a key lock installed and operational prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. All structures as set forth in Section 16-1.2 above for which a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued on or before the effective date of this section shall have twelve (12) months from enactment date of this Ordinance to have a key lock box installed and operational. Should the record owner of any existing structure for which a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued make written application to the fire chief within this twelve (12) month period that his structure be exempt from this requirement of the installation of a key lock box, such exemption shall be granted provided that the record owner acknowledges and agrees that the County will not be held liable for any damages to the owner's structure resulting from forced entry by Dorchester County Fire Rescue during an emergency.

3. The type of key lock boxes to be implemented within Dorchester County shall be a Knox Box brand system or such other rapid entry system of comparable quality which has been specifically authorized in writing by the Fire Chief as being an acceptable substitution for the Knox Box brand system.

#### **SEC. 16-1.3 – INSTALLATION**

1. All Knox Boxes, or its approved substitute, shall be installed to the left side of the main business door.
2. All Knox Boxes, or its approved substitute, shall be flush mounted on new construction sixty inches from the ground, if possible and within 10 feet from the main entry on existing construction.
3. In the event that the rapid entry box system cannot be installed at the aforesaid location and/or height the Fire Chief may designate in writing a different location and method of installation.
4. Any property with an electronic security gate shall have the Knox Box installed OUTSIDE of the gate.
5. The Fire Chief must approve any changes in the installation.

#### **SEC. 16-1.4 – MAINTENANCE**

The operator of the building shall immediately notify the Fire Chief and provide the new keys when a lock box is changed or rekeyed. The key to such lock shall be secured in the Knox Box.

#### **SEC. 16-1.5 – CONTENTS OF LOCK BOX**

The contents of the box shall be as follows:

1. Keys to locked points of ingress or egress, whether on the interior or exterior of such buildings.
2. Keys to all mechanical rooms.
3. Keys to all locked electrical rooms.
4. Keys to elevator and their control rooms.
5. Keys to the Fire Alarm panels.
6. Keys (special) to re-set pull stations or other Fire Protective devices.
7. Keys to any other areas as requested by Fire Chief.


## **SEC. 16-1.6 – FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. No fire department personnel shall carry a Knox Box Key.
2. All Knox Box access keys shall be installed in a Knox Box Sentra-Loc system installed in the Fire Apparatus.

## **SEC. 16-1.7 – PENALTIES**

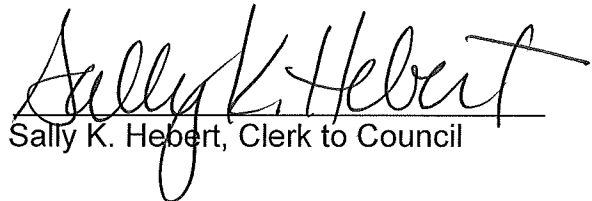
1. Any person, entity or corporation who has violated any provisions of this Ordinance shall upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not more than Three Hundred (\$300.00) Dollars. Each day a violation continues shall be considered a separate offense.
2. If any sentence, clause or section or any part of this Ordinance is for any reason found to be unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, such unconstitutionality, illegality or invalidity shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions, sentences, clauses or sections or parts of the same contained in this Ordinance. It is hereby declared as the intent of Dorchester County Council that this Ordinance would have been adopted has such unconstitutionality, illegality or invalidity sentence, clause or section or part thereof and not been included therein.

Ordained and enacted by Dorchester County Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2014.



William R. Hearn, Jr., Chairman  
Dorchester County Council

ATTEST:



Sally K. Hebert, Clerk to Council

First Reading: February 18, 2014

Second Reading: March 3, 2014

Public Hearing: April 7, 2014

Third Reading: April 21, 2014