EMS Standard Operating Procedures

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<td>02/2016</td>
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Purpose:

To establish written procedures for the utilization of the EMS Department Sentra-Lok Program on various facilities and residences within the City of West Des Moines (commonly referred to as the “Knox Box” system.)

Policy:

The primary purpose of the Sentra-Lok system is to eliminate multiple or master keys for target occupancies. The system is designed to be used for emergency entrance into key facilities, when the owner/occupant is not present, eliminating any potential forcible entry damage. Any other use of the system must be first approved by the Fire Marshal or Fire Chief. Due to the very sensitive nature of facility security, it is critical that these procedures be followed closely.

Procedure:

1. When an emergency exists in a facility with a Knox Box System and no owner/occupant is present, the Sentra-Lok system shall be used if an applicable apparatus is present.

2. If an EMS apparatus equipped with Sentra-Lok system is not present, a Fire Department officer with a Knox Box key may be utilized. Officers who possess keys include:
   - Fire Chief
   - Fire Marshal
The FD officer with the key shall have Westcom log who they are and that they are making entry with the key.

3. To activate the Sentra-Lok system in an apparatus, contact Westcom and have them page the security box in the appropriate apparatus to unlock it. The medic requesting the activation shall identify their name, as the requesting officer.

4. Anytime emergency entrance is made into an unoccupied facility, the owner (or occupant if owner is not available) shall be called to the scene to secure their structure. It is also recommended that a West Des Moines police officer be on the scene when a facility must be entered through forcible entry or a Lock Box system to witness security issues.

5. As soon as possible, the facility Knox box shall have all applicable keys returned by the same person opening it and it is recommended that an additional person witness the return of the keys.

6. The Knox Box Key shall be returned to the EMS apparatus Sentra-Lok as soon as possible but always before the apparatus leaves the scene. Notify Westcom and have them log when the key was returned to the apparatus Sentra-Lok and by whom.

7. The primary patient care provider shall include, in the patient care report narrative, a complete description of who unlocked the Knox Box and locked the facility, including the owner/occupant’s name and telephone number that was on the scene.

8. The Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshal and Fire Inspector have car mounted combination controlled lock boxes. These boxes secure a Knox Box key also. The staff car key is primarily used in a non-emergency situation, to access keys in local facility mounted Knox Boxes.

9. Any unusual circumstances surrounding the use of a Knox Box or the condition of keys shall be reported immediately to the EMS Supervisor who will communicate the issue with the Fire Marshall’s Office.