



TOWN OF CHARLTON

Fire Department

PO Box 114, Charlton City, MA 01508
Phone 508-248-2299 Fax 508-248-6190

*Headquarters Located at 10 Power Station Road
Chief Charles E. Cloutier Jr.*



To: Planning Board
From: Chief Cloutier
Date: September 8, 2008

Emergency Access System Regulation

To provide both fire department emergency access and building security for properties, the Town of Charlton and Charlton Fire Department have selected the Emergency Access Systems (EAS) Key Box or Lock System for use in accomplishment of these goals. This is a system that will allow Fire Department access to a key or lock for non-destructive entry into a property.

This is a mandatory system for commercial establishments and optional for residential properties in the Town of Charlton served by the Charlton Fire Department. In this program the building owner orders the box or lock to install on their property or gate for use by the Charlton Fire Department in an emergency. The owner or occupant of the property shall be responsible for maintaining the proper keys for the property in their EAS box.

General info:

In order to create a community-wide rapid entry system to decreased loss of life and property for business and residential property owners the Emergency Access System was chosen. The valuable benefits of rapid entry as noted below:

The cost to the property owner for an EAS box should be compared with potential savings realized by:

- 1) Eliminating forced entry damage
- 2) Reducing the response time needed by the fire department to gain access into a structure during anytime of day or night, holidays included.
- 3) Eliminating need for authorized personnel (key runners) to deliver keys to the building site during an alarm response.
- 4) The boxes can be equipped with a "tamper-switch" to connect to a burglar alarm, this is recommended.

The EAS system eliminates entry delays; therefore it helps reduce internal damage to the property. In addition, the fire department is able to limit the potential for firefighter injury (no forced entry is required). The system will also provide valuable emergency contact information to responding emergency personnel.



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Homes and Businesses having an EAS Box or lock shall be noted at the 911 Center in the Computer Aided Dispatch system. Responders will be notified the property is equipped with a box as soon as the address is entered.

Liability:

The Charlton Fire Department has an obligation to enter private property when summoned by a 911 call, Emergency Medical Services request, an automatic fire alarm or other reported emergency. The Charlton Fire Department's mission is based on this obligation and consequently includes a certain level of responsibility. The EAS system does NOT increase fire department or local government liability.

Procurement / Order Verification:

To procure an EAS lock box or lock the property owner or occupant must obtain an application (Emergency Access Systems, Inc. Order Form #1) from the Charlton Fire Department EAS Coordinator, complete the application including having it signed by the Fire Chief or EAS Coordinator and send it to the EAS Company along with payment. The EAS box or lock will be shipped to the purchaser. The owner will be educated regarding the Charlton Fire Department's operating guidelines for entry into properties.

Installation procedures:

Upon receipt of the item(s), the property owner shall contact the EAS Coordinator to verify an approved mounting location. It will be the owner/occupant responsibility to schedule an appointment to meet with the EAS Coordinator.

The box shall be installed outside, in sight of the main entrance 48-60 inches above finished grade level as approved by the Charlton Fire Department.

The EAS Coordinator shall witness the placing the minimum of two (2) complete sets of keys (and any paperwork) in the box and secure the lock for the owner/occupant.

All parties shall all sign the installation/ inspection verification form with copies being distributed as follows:

Original - Building owner/Occupant
1st Copy - Fire departments designee

Procedure to Add/Remove keys:

The property owner/occupant or EAS Coordinator (whichever requests the change) shall follow the same procedure as outlined in the installation procedure section of this policy. An updated installation/ inspection verification form will be distributed as above.



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Responsibility:

The Fire Chief is ultimately accountable for providing security for the EAS box keys assigned to his/her officers. Any missing keys shall immediately be reported verbally and followed up in writing to the chief. Maintenance of security of lock box keys is essential to maintain credibility of the program and any loss will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action initiated.

Verification:

The EAS Coordinator or designee shall ensure that a yearly check is performed on each box. This shall consist of checking for accuracy of keys, box lid operation, and tamper alarm operation (if applicable). This will also require the reissuance of an installation/inspection verification form.

Failure to install:

Should a commercial building in Charlton fail to be equipped with such EAS box the forcible entry procedure may be implemented. The Charlton Fire Department Incident Commander shall have sole discretion in implementing the department forcible entry procedure to gain access to assure property conservation. The property must then be secured at cost to the property owner.