



Councillor Paul Ainslie
Toronto City Council
Scarborough East - Ward 43

Chair, Government Management Committee

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Date: March 31, 2015
To: Community Development and Recreation Committee
Re: Fire Safety Lock Boxes

Recommendation:

The Community Development and Recreation Committee recommend that:

1. City Council request the Fire Chief and General Manager, Fire Services, and the Chief, Paramedic Services, in consultation with Toronto Police Services, explore improving the process of securing the keys located in fire safety boxes across the City of Toronto with a view to increasing public safety and report back to the Community Development and Recreation Committee at the June 24, 2015 meeting.

The City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 470, Fire Safety Boxes is in place to serve emergency services. The fire safety boxes are however often vandalized and reaped of their contents. Those involved in mischief incidences find it easy access the fire safety boxes located in the lobbies of buildings. The boxes are located in visible locations to benefit the Toronto Police, Fire and Paramedic Services. These boxes included keys providing access to crucial areas in the building, including mechanical and storage areas. In some cases, the keys contained in the fireboxes are master keys which could allow the holder to access any area of the building.

The current safety boxes are made of lightweight material, designed to hold the building's fire plan and keys. One could simply take the bottom corner of the door, pull out and push up. The metal is easily plied and a small opening allows one to reach in and remove the keys. These keys are then used to access the interior security door and onward.

The areas that can be accessed with these keys impact the safety of the building including heating and cooling systems, elevators, potential exists, storage areas, other restricted areas in the building, and could include apartment units if the fire keys are master keys. Toronto Police Services has noted that there have been times that the removal of the keys has been concealed not to be discovered until the next emergency when Toronto Police Services, Toronto Fire Division the Paramedic Services make an attempt to retrieve them, this may effect response time and could impact public safety.

The most valuable item in the safety box are the access keys. A solution to secure the keys is paramount. One solutions could have the key secured in a separate box. There are a number of boxes to explore that are relatively inexpensive and easily accessible by Emergency workers. These are manual in operation and can be easily retrofitted to any building. The access code (number punch system) could be included in the 911 ANI/ALI information for each building, not unlike the access codes provided now. The key box would not provide fool-proof security, but would assist in the immediate detection of a theft.

A surface mounted lock box, for example, would be more tamper resistant than the current fireboxes. If they are tampered with, a tool would be required along with time to pry the box open, drawing attention. Two things that the current fire boxes do not require now.

Sincerely,
Councillor Paul Ainslie
City of Toronto, Scarborough East Ward 43