



NORTHGLENN POLICE DEPARTMENT

50 W. Community Center Drive
Northglenn, CO 80234-3308

Subject: Lock Box Program

Here are the basics:

How it works: We use a lock box similar to those used by real estate agents to secure a house key. The boxes are given to senior citizens living alone or anyone who has a concern that they may need police/fire/medical help and won't be able to reach the door to unlock it. The added stress of a broken door or window can be overwhelming.

Our dispatchers can add a computer "flag" for addresses with information (in this case the info about the lock box), and the dispatch computer system automatically supplies that information when the address is entered on a call for service. Calls come through the 911 system, which is answered at our police department. If they receive the call directly, the fire department and EMS notify us when they are going to a call in our city. The police dispatcher enters these calls into the computer as a "BOLO", even though no officer is being sent. The flag will show up even for a "BOLO".

If we have a call at the house, fire personnel are advised of the location of the lock box. If they arrive at the house and find the door locked, they call police dispatch on a **cell phone** and are given the combination. The combination is relayed only by phone to ensure that someone with a scanner doesn't get the address (which is given over the radio) and combination for the same call. Even the resident is not given the combination because it's too tempting to share it with relatives, neighbors and workmen, which would defeat the security.

The fire department, which responds on all medical calls, has a similar dispatch computer capable of "flagging" addresses. When a new lock box is placed at a house, the fire department is advised of the name, address and lock box location but not the combination. For security reasons, we try limit the number of people who can access the combinations. We decided not to have it accessible through computers outside the police department, and we give the combination to fire personnel only when they are at a house and need to get inside.

After the combination has been given to responding police, fire, or medics, dispatch leaves a phone message for me. For added security, I go to the house and change the lock box on my next available workday.

The files are kept in the dispatch computers, in my computer and a hard copy in my files. The resident and landlord, if it's a rental, sign a contract to participate in the program. It is a basic "hold-harmless" waiver.