



701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

## Council Memo

Department Source: Fire

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: May 4, 2026

Re: Knox Connect Software Master Agreement

Impacted Ward: Citywide

### Executive Summary

Fire is seeking approval for a Software Master Agreement with Knox Associates AZ, Inc. for Knox Connect.

### Discussion

The City of Columbia Fire Department utilizes the Knox Company Knox Box program as a critical component of its emergency response operations. The Knox Box system is a secure, standardized rapid-entry solution that allows authorized first responders to access locked buildings during emergencies without causing forced-entry damage.

Knox Boxes are installed on commercial, industrial, healthcare, educational, and public facilities throughout the city. Each box securely stores building access keys, gate keys, or access cards. During an emergency, firefighters use a department-controlled master key to retrieve these items, enabling immediate entry. This rapid access capability significantly reduces response time, limits property damage, and enhances life safety for occupants.

To further strengthen the security and accountability of this system, the Fire Department is seeking to implement KnoxConnect, a cloud-based software management platform designed to support the Knox eLock system. KnoxConnect integrates hardware, user credentials, and access control into a centralized system that can be managed remotely.

Key benefits of KnoxConnect include:

**Enhanced Security Control:** Provides centralized management of electronic key systems such as KeySecure and KeyDefender devices.

**Accountability and Transparency:** Maintains a comprehensive audit trail of all key access activity, including time- and date-stamped records of key removals and returns.

**Operational Efficiency:** Allows authorized personnel to configure, monitor, and manage access permissions from anywhere via a secure cloud platform.

**Regulatory Compliance:** Supports documentation and reporting requirements for internal policies and external audits.



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The implementation of KnoxConnect will modernize the City's existing Knox Box program by adding a layer of digital oversight and accountability. This investment will improve operational readiness, strengthen security protocols, and ensure that the Columbia Fire Department continues to provide rapid, safe, and effective emergency response services.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: \$721 first year cost, covered by existing funds from Fire.  
Long-Term Impact: Similar yearly ongoing cost subject to price increases.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Safe Community, Secondary Impact: Organizational Excellence, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Legislative History

Date	Action
	N/A

Suggested Council Action

Staff recommends authorizing the City Manager to execute a software agreement with Knox Associates AZ, Inc.