



WHY YOU NEED A LOCK BOX ON YOUR HOUSE

Over the years, I've had to assist friends and clients with personal emergency situations. Today, I want to address one step ALL of us can take to make the job of people like me and any other first responders MUCH easier and make your life much safer.

We never know when disaster will strike our lives. I've seen young couples in their 40's leave multiple children parent-less due to unexpected disease. I've seen a 21-year-old young man in a permanent coma and on a ventilator because of a truck tire that exploded while he was trying to change. I've seen young people also in their 40's and younger just drop due to undiagnosed heart conditions. And I've seen seniors have strokes and die or have their hips spontaneously break, leaving them completely incapacitated, or just fall and need assistance getting back up. And I know of one case where it took a lady fell, broke her hip and spent almost 2 days attempting to crawl to a phone (battery was dead) before someone noticed she was missing, couldn't reach her, and went to check on her. In another case, a friend had a stroke and when no one could reach her and no neighbors or friends had a key, the police were called to do a welfare check, but they declined to forcibly enter her home, even upon the insistence of her daughter in another state. Eventually the daughter had to drive 8 hours overnight, entered the residence with her key (the police still wouldn't enter) and she found her mother deceased. If the police ever refuse you, call the fire department.

What are a couple of strategies that could've been put in place that might have helped these people avoid these dire situations or at least better cope with them? A couple of things:

No matter what your age, see your primary care physician on a regular basis. Do what he or she tells you, get the appropriate inoculations and routine exams such as a heart scan, EKG, colonoscopy, and other gender-specific diagnostic tests/exams.

Get a fall alert device. Most smart wristwatches, like the Apple Watch, have this technology already built in. Or a less expensive, even better option that I like is the [Lively Medical Alert Mobile Plus emergency alert system](#)¹, available at Best Buy, Walgreens, etc. – from the folks who bring you the Jitterbug phones. And program your smartphone with your ICE (In Case of Emergency) information – emergency responders know to check this.

Place a simple, inexpensive, Realtor-type lock box for your front door, such as the Masterlock 5400EC or equivalent. Amazon has many varieties for \$20 on up or you can get them at just about any hardware store. Yes, I know a lot of people have keypads on their garage doors to open them in case the battery in your car's remote fails, but when was the last time you tested that keypad to see if the battery was still good? Ah ha!! Okay, so if you change it regularly and have given a trusted individual the code, good. But, some (wise) people lock the door from the garage to the house (and everyone should). Have you hidden a key somewhere in the garage where your trusted individual can find it? Will they remember where it is? I think you see what I'm getting at here.

In many of these cases, such as with a heart attack or stroke, seconds count and the **IN**ability of emergency responders to access you as expeditiously as necessary can literally mean life or death. In several of the aforementioned instances, the affected individuals had not made arrangements for a trusted neighbor or relative living close by to have a key to their homes for just such an emergency.

So today, I'm asking everyone to find that trusted friend, neighbor, or relative and get them a key and emergency codes to your home. If you get the lockbox, program a code in that your trusted individual can easily remember and have them program it into their phone somewhere. If you don't have someone like that whom you can trust, at least put the lock box on your front door, call 911 and provide them with the code so in the event first responders do ever have to come to your aid, the 911 dispatcher can give them the code and they can get immediate access to and also avoid causing costly damage to your home and have to leave your home unsecured if they have to take you to the hospital.

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¹ <https://www.livelydirect.com/mobile-plus/>