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Help Emergency Responders Help You

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(3) Single-family residential structures existing upon the effective date of the ordinance from which this section derives shall post the required numerical street designation on or before April 30, 2009. (4) Homeowners may, either in writing or by calling the Fire Department and EMS of Pine Knoll Shores, request that town fire/EMS personnel install, at a reasonable fee to be prepaid by the property owner, a numbered sign which satisfies the house numbers ordinance. (b) Multifamily projects. Every multifamily project within the town shall cause each project identification sign to include the designated numerical street address assigned by the town to the project. Such sign and designation must be readily visible from the nearest street rightof-way. In addition, each residence within each such project must post in a consistent project location, and in a style and color readily visible from the nearest access to such residence, the unit designation of such residence. As required by section 10-2, no certificate of occupancy shall be issued for any residence within a multifamily project until the required designations are appropriately installed. All existing multifamily projects must comply with the requirements of this subsection on or before January 1, 1991.

If your home is not identified according to the town ordinance, please make arrangements to bring it into compliance. Clearly visible house numbers can save valuable time when you are in need of emergency services.

Easy (and quick) access for emergency responders. Access to the patient can be slowed if the house is locked and responders have to gain entry. It is not recommended to hide a key and plan to shout out to the responders where they can find it. You may not be able to shout to the responders, and valuable time can be wasted as they try to find your key—not to mention that thieves know where to look for a hidden key. When every moment counts, it is better for responders to force entry and sacrifice the door jamb.

There is an alternative that is preferable and may be quicker than forced entry. Homeowners may purchase a "Knox box," which is a key box similar to a lock box used by realtors. The Knox box is designed to hold a key to your home—and can be accessed only by the fire captain on duty, ensuring that your Knox box is opened only in the event of an emergency. The master key for Pine Knoll Shores Knox boxes is specific to the area served by the Pine Knoll Shores Fire Department, and it is important to note that master keys from other fire departments will not fit boxes in Pine Knoll Shores.

A Knox box must be purchased through the fire chief at the fire department—and is a considerable investment. The cost of a Knox box is about \$250, but provides peace of mind that is priceless. When a purchased Knox box arrives at the fire station, someone from the department will come to your home to give you advice on the best location for the box. Let me emphasize that *no one is required to purchase a Knox box*. If you are in need of emergency services, our emergency responders will gain entry to your home—whatever it takes.

File of Life. The File of Life was fully explained in the February 2015 issue of *The Shoreline*, which can be accessed on the town's website (townofpks.com). Click on "*The Shoreline*" and select "Past Issues" to read the article. Briefly, the File of Life is a folder that holds a form containing information that will be helpful to emergency responders (medical conditions/history, medications you are taking, doctors' names, emergency contact information, etc.)—and is designed to be prominently displayed in your home. When the form is completely filled out and kept up to date, it can speak for you if you are unable to do so. The File of Life folder is available free of charge at town hall.

Emergency room Discharge Summary. When you are treated in the emergency room, a Discharge Summary is created with the details of your visit (medical condition that necessitated treatment, diagnosis, recommendations for follow up, new medications that may have been prescribed, etc.). If you have a need to call emergency responders subsequent to your emergency room visit, there may be important information contained in your Discharge Summary that can be of help to EMTs. You can place the Discharge Summary in your File of Life and it will be readily available to emergency responders.

Our goal as first responders is to make sure we deliver the highest quality of care to our residents and visitors that we serve. When you are in need of emergency services, every second counts—and following these suggestions will help emergency personnel help you.

Please stop by the Pine Knoll Shores Fire Department and speak to me or one of the fire captains if you have any questions regarding our emergency services, or call 247-2268 to speak to one of us by phone.