

Garland Residential Lockbox Program
By Becky Thurmond – CNA Crime & Safety Committee Chair

Some of us in the neighborhood are getting on up there in age or dealing with physical or health issues where “I’ve fallen and can’t get up” or any other instance when you can’t unlock your door, is a possibility. We might not have family nearby or a trusted neighbor with a key to let first responders into our house to check on us or help. Of course, police and fire are quite capable of breaking into our house but not always without some damage. That’s where the **free** Garland lockbox program can help. All you need is a set of spare keys for your front door. (Don’t forget about the storm door, if you have one.)

Note: the information below is paraphrased from the PD website.

The lockbox program is open to all Garland residents who either live alone or must be left alone on a regular basis and:

- Are age 65 and above or
- Are under 65, with a major medical issue that could render them incapacitated or unconscious

If you are eligible, complete a Lockbox Program Application and return it to the Garland Police Department. Applications can be picked up at the front desk of the Police Department or printed from their website (www.garlandpolice.com). Click on Programs & Opportunities → Community Programs on the left side of the screen, then click on Residential Lockbox Program. A link to the application is in the first paragraph under an explanation of how the program works.

Completed applications can be dropped off at the front desk of the Police Department, given in person to any Neighborhood Police Officer, or mailed to them at 1891 Forest Lane, Garland 75042.

Once the application is approved, a Neighborhood Police Officer (probably not Officer Capers but they’re all wonderful) will contact you to come by and install the lockbox. It will take the officer just a few minutes to attach the lockbox to your house near the front door. Give him your set of spare keys; he’ll put them in the lockbox and set the combination.

The combination will be entered into the fire/police dispatch computer system, attached to your address. A note that you have a lockbox will show up for the dispatcher and fire or police being sent to your house along with the combination.

The lockbox will **only** be used during an emergency call when first responders can’t make entry without using force. In other words, don’t even think about calling them if you lock yourself out of the house!

If you move or no longer need the lockbox, you’ll need to let the Police Department know. A Neighborhood Police Officer will remove the keys and lockbox, and return the empty lockbox to the PD.

I just recently got around to getting my lockbox. I don’t like to admit that I’ve reached a “certain age” (unless I can score a senior discount), but I’d hate for my family to have to deal with a broken window if I get carted away in an ambulance. This is free so I filled out an application. I think it was only about a week after I dropped the application off before I got a call from the PD, and Officer Wade came out that same afternoon. He said that’s the average wait time although they do periodically run out of lockboxes and may take longer to get to you.

And here’s a good idea for anybody. The Garland Fire Department recommends that everybody fill out an Emergency Medical Information Form. It’s available on their website at garlandfire.com under Community Programs, Life Saving Information. Fill it out, place it in a baggie, write “Fire Dept.” on the baggie, and attach it to your refrigerator (magnet, tape, whatever will hold). It provides a list of your medications, medical history and allergies, all of which could be critical information in an emergency. Take advantage of this free program! Besides making it easier and faster for help to reach you, it can provide some peace of mind to you and your loved ones.