



TEMPLE TERRACE FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STROKE VICTIM SAYS KNOX BOX HELPED SAVE HER LIFE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Two pages)

(TEMPLE TERRACE – 12/6/06) – Longtime Temple Terrace resident Mary Frances Hart says the *Knox Box Rapid Entry System* played a crucial role in helping her survive a sudden stroke on Sept. 27, 2006.

Hart, 75, had a *Knox Box* installed at her home in July 2006 at the urging of her friends in the Temple Terrace Woman's Club. Little did she know how soon she would need it.

"It was a Wednesday morning, and I was getting ready to go to a Woman's Club meeting," she recalled. "I was in the back bedroom, and suddenly my body just sort of jerked to the side, sort of off-balance. I thought: What is this?"

"At first, I didn't think much about it," she said. "So I got dressed, and I started putting on my makeup, and I noticed my hand didn't want to work right."

Although she was a good health, Hart realized she was having a stroke. She called her doctor's office, then called a friend, who immediately came over. By then, however, Hart was lying on her bed, unable to move.

The home's front door was locked, so Hart's friend called 9-1-1. The Temple Terrace Fire Department responded within minutes, and paramedics were able to get into the home quickly, thanks to the *Knox Box*.

"They were able to use their *Knox* key to get into the house," said Division Chief David Becker of the Temple Terrace Fire Department.

Paramedics rushed Hart to University Community Hospital, where she was treated with clot-reducing drugs. The window of opportunity for successful treatment, Becker noted, is a mere three hours. Hart got it just in time.

“She did everything right,” Becker said. “She was a perfectly healthy woman, but she recognized that this was something that could benefit her. Now, she’s an advocate that everyone needs a *Knox Box*.”

Hart, who has fully recovered from her stroke, agrees.

“I’m awfully glad I got it when I did,” she said. “That’s what got them in here so quickly.”

The Know Box is a small, wall-mounted safe that holds building keys for firefighters to retrieve in emergencies. Firefighters carry a master key, giving them immediate access to homes or other buildings when needed.

The Temple Terrace Fire Department began using the *Knox Box* system in 2002. Civic activist D’ee Griffith spearheaded a community effort to raise money for the project, working hand-in-hand with the Temple Terrace Preservation Society and fire department. Today, about 200 of the boxes are in use throughout the City, Becker said.

There is no charge to residents to have a Knox Box; however, supplies are limited. The City’s goal is to add 15 to 20 new boxes a year. The boxes also are available for purchase at www.knoxbox.com. Residents who purchase a box will still need to register with the fire department.

The boxes are particularly geared toward elderly folks living alone (such as Hart, a widow), elderly people with medical problems, and adults who have elderly relatives living with them.

To apply for a free Knox Box, contact the Temple Terrace Fire Department at (813) 989-7121 or download an application from the City’s website at www.TempleTerrace.com. (Click on Departments, then Fire Department, then Applications and Forms.)

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