

# Seattle Fire Prevention Division

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## Locking Caps for Building Fire Department Connections (FDCs)

### What's a Fire Department Connection (FDC)?

A Fire Department Connection (FDC) is a special hookup on the outside of a building that allows firefighters to connect their hoses to the building's internal sprinkler or standpipe system. When our firefighters arrive at a fire, we can connect our powerful pumps to the FDC to boost the water supply and pressure to the sprinklers inside, or to provide water to hoses used by firefighters inside the building. This helps us fight the fire more effectively to save lives and property.

### What are the Code Requirements and Why do FDC's Need Caps or Covers?

If the Seattle Fire Code require your building to have sprinklers, the code may also require an FDC. FDCs are more commonly required in larger and taller buildings. The building owner must properly maintain FDC's so they work when needed in an emergency (2021 Seattle Fire Code 901.6.1).

The Seattle Fire Code, and its referenced standard, the National Fire Protection Association Standard #25 *Standard for the Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems* (NFPA 25), requires that the FDC have a cap or plug (2020 NFPA 25 13.8.1). Without a cap, anything from trash, dirt, leaves, bird nests, or even vandalism can clog the connection. If firefighters connect their hoses to a blocked FDC, this debris can be forced into the building's fire suppression system, potentially jamming sprinkler heads or standpipe valves, severely impairing or even rendering the system useless during a fire. While some caps are designed to break easily for quick access, others, especially locking caps, help deter vandalism and unauthorized tampering with the fire suppression system.

### My Building's FDC Caps Keep Going Missing. What Options Do I Have?

The Seattle Fire Department allows building owners to install locking caps for FDCs. We carry the required key to allow our firefighters to open these caps during an emergency. People without a key will find it very difficult to remove the caps. The only brand of locking cap allowed in Seattle is the Knox brand Fire Department Connection.

**To purchase** <https://www.knoxbox.com/Products/FDC-Locking-Caps>

**To install** Some approved contractors can install the product. If you need assistance from the Seattle Fire Department for installation, contact the Fire Prevention Division at [SFD\\_FMO\\_Reception@seattle.gov](mailto:SFD_FMO_Reception@seattle.gov) and provide your name, contact phone, and building address.

**Thank you** The Seattle Fire Department's mission is to save lives and protect property. We appreciate your attention to ensuring that your FDC is properly covered so it will work during an emergency.

