

**Chatham County**

**ARTICLE X  
Emergency Access Requirements  
For Gated Communities  
Unincorporated Chatham County**

**21-1001. Purpose:**

Response to an emergency by the emergency response departments can be hampered without immediate access to a property or into a building. Following are the findings:

- i. There are a number of residential subdivisions with gated/controlled access in unincorporated Chatham County.
- ii. Emergency vehicles and personnel have difficulty promptly entering the areas closed with such gates or barriers when confronted with threats to public health, safety, and welfare; and
- iii. There are currently no unified standards for installation of equipment to access gated communities by emergency vehicles during an emergency.

**221-1002 Intent:**

The intent of this article is to:

- i. Promote health, safety, and general welfare of the public by establishing standards for installation of equipment to facilitate access to emergency vehicles and persons during emergency situations.
- ii. Provide standards for accessing gated communities during emergencies by persons and emergency vehicles of the fire department, police department and ambulances.
- iii. Provide provisions for emergency vehicles to access gated communities in the event of inclement weather, national security situations, and special emergencies.
- iv. Reduce delay caused by certain vehicle access control devices or systems or no vehicle access control devices or systems.

**22-1003. Definitions:**

Approved: Approval by the Fire Chief/General Manager, Southside Fire and EMS Department.

- a. Emergency: Any event requiring the immediate response or action of fire/rescue, emergency medical, or law enforcement agencies for situations arising from, but not limited to, fire, explosion, acts of God, or act of public enemy which, if not corrected immediately, will potentially result in loss of life, property, or substantial environmental resources.
- b. Key Box: A secure, tamperproof device with a lock operable only by a fire department master key, and containing building entry keys and other such devices that may be required for access in an emergency.
- c. LED: Light Emitting Diode
- d. Pedestrian Gate: An access point used exclusively for pedestrian entry and egress.
- e. Radio Controlled System: An emergency access control system that opens gates and other such barriers when the emergency responder clicks (pulses) their radio transceivers on a restricted FCC radio frequency typically allocated to public safety agencies.
- f. Shall: Indicates a mandatory requirement.
- g. Standard: The rules and regulations contained in the International Fire Code, 2003 as amended, adopted by the Southside Fire and EMS Department and designed to provide specific guidelines to Southside Fire and EMS Department.
- h. Vehicular Gate or Barrier: A device intended to control vehicular access.
- i. Gated community: A multi-dwellings community or other accessory uses that are enclosed within a geographical area by restrictive gates.

## **21-1004. Standards:**

### **4.1 Operation of Gates or Restricted Access:**

Where access to an area is restricted because of secured openings and where immediate access is necessary for emergency (life saving, fire fighting purposes or law enforcement purposes) the following is required.

- a. All vehicle access gates or barriers shall be electrically operated for entry and exit by an approved method by the unincorporated Chatham County; and furthermore they will be equipped with the required following access control systems:

i. Key Box System shall be installed. The Key Box System shall be based upon the approved and adopted Fire Code(s) by the fire department(s); and

ii. Radio operated controller:

All blocking barriers shall be equipped with a range-able radio receiver capable of receiving access commands from public safety radio transceivers. Such emergency access control device will be able to operate with the radio systems typically used by public safety agencies operating within Chatham County and the State of Georgia.

Exceptions: Radio controlled exit/activation LED device may be waived by installation of a “free exit” loop.

- b. Gates requiring radio-controlled exit/LED activation shall be provided with an approved two (2) inch by two (2) inch blue, reflective marker visible to the existing vehicle. It shall be located in the center of the exit gate.
- c. Wiring of electrical gates shall be provided by AC (Alternate Current) current with underground installation.
- d. Electrically operated gates shall fail to the open position when the power is off. They shall remain open until power is restored.
- e. Key Box System authorization forms are required for order of key switches, boxes, and pad locks. The forms may be obtained from the Southside Fire and EMS Department.

#### **21-1005 Submittal:**

The following information shall be submitted to the Southside Fire and EMS Department:

- i. Method of operation of equipment
- ii. If applicable UL (Underwriters Laboratory) listing numbers of equipment used
- iii. Manufacturers specification sheets for electrical gate controller; and
- iv. A site plan of the property and a site plan detail of each gate location drawn to scale (1”-10’, 1”-20’, or 1”-40’) indicating or showing:
  - a. Contractors company name, address, phone number, and contact person;
  - b. Exact locations of the entry to the property;

- c. Assessors parcel number;
- d. Property lines;
- e. Proposed fence, pedestrian gates, and vehicle gates; and
- f. Proposed location of key box and radio operated controller
- g. Site plan requirements are for new construction only.

**21-1006. Approval:**

The plans, installation and operation of equipment shall be approved by Chief/General Manager, Southside Fire and EMS Department.

Southside Fire and EMS Department shall test and approve operation and compatibility of equipment.

The Chief/General Manager, Southside Fire and EMS Department shall not approve such plans unless the plans allow emergency vehicle and emergency personnel to open electronically or electrically secured openings or gates by city and county approved radio transceivers used by such emergency vehicles or personnel.

**21-1007. Maintenance:**

Emergency access gates and barriers shall be maintained and may include:

- i. Batteries/power back up required for operation of the system during power failure;
- ii. Lubrication of moving parts and hinges per manufacturer specifications; and
- iii. Any subsequent attention required to maintain the approved list of allocated radio frequencies for emergency used operation of the gate and the controller.

**21-1008. Applicability:**

Within eighteen months (18) from the date of radio signal switch to a new adopted system by the City of Savannah, all new gated communities and existing gated communities with electronically or electrically secured openings or gates or barriers that impede access to an area shall either be a. Removed, or b. Constructed and

maintained in accordance with plans and operation approved by the Southside Fire and EMS Department.

All costs associated with the removal of any un-approved system(s), purchase and or installation and maintenance of systems shall be the responsibility of the property owner(s), home owners association or any such individual or group responsible for maintenance of the property.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007.

**CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA**

\_\_\_\_\_  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pete Liakakis, Chairman  
Chatham County Commission

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sybil Tillman, Clerk  
Chatham County Commission

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