



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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House Fire and Multiple Calls Tap Out Fire District

Bonney Lake, WA—East Pierce Fire and Rescue firefighters were inundated with multiple calls Saturday, many of them serious. Between noon and 9 p.m., there were 27 alarms, including five patients experiencing heart problems and one cardiac arrest, one large vehicle fire, two brush fires and many more medical emergencies. On a typical day, the firefighters—who protect Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, South Prairie, Tehaleh, Milton and Edgewood—respond to 27 alarms during a 24-hour period.

Resources became even more strained when, just before 5 p.m., East Pierce firefighters were dispatched to a house fire on the east side of Lake Tapps. They arrived to find flames and smoke visible from the two-story home.

Firefighters from the Valley Regional Fire Authority and Orting Valley Fire and Rescue joined East Pierce crews to battle the blaze. They were hampered by water issues and were forced to transport water to the fire using tenders. At one point, East Pierce Battalion Chief Rick Goetz worried that the burning house was becoming unstable and ordered the firefighters to evacuate the structure. Shortly afterwards, the roof collapsed. Fortunately, no one was injured. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

At 6:23 p.m., firefighters responded to a serious motor vehicle crash at 40th Street East and 218th Avenue East, also on the east side of Lake Tapps. The driver of a vehicle lost control, hitting a guardrail and careening over an embankment. According to East Pierce Assistant Chief Jim Jaques, passers by pulled one of the occupants from the vehicle before it caught fire. A second occupant also escaped. Both occupants were transported to a local hospital; one in serious condition.

Jaques says that during the influx of calls, the district had to rely on mutual aid from neighboring departments, including South King Fire and Rescue, Valley Regional Fire Authority, Buckley Fire Department, Orting Valley Fire and Rescue and Central Pierce Fire and Rescue. A general alarm brought off-duty East Pierce firefighters and volunteers in to staff engines and medic units.

The busy day caps a record year for East Pierce Fire and Rescue. In 2016, the total number of alarms topped 10,000, a nearly 17 percent jump over the past five years.

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