



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Contact:**

Fire Chief Bud Backer  
East Pierce Fire and Rescue  
18421 Veterans Memorial Drive East  
Bonney Lake, WA 98391  
Phone: 253-863-1800  
bbacker@eastpiercefirerescue.org  
www.eastpiercefirerescue.org

**No Snow Day for Your Firefighters**

*Bonney Lake, WA*—As the snow began to accumulate on Sunday, calls for assistance also mounted for local firefighters. “During the 24-hour period from 8 a.m. Sunday to 8 a.m. Monday, East Pierce Fire and Rescue responded to 70 alarms,” said East Pierce Fire Chief Bud Backer. “A normal shift runs 27 to 34 calls. Answering 70 alarms is an extremely busy day.”

The majority of the 9-1-1 calls were for emergency medical aid. Here’s how it broke out:

<u>Type of Call</u>	<u>Response</u>
Emergency Medical	28
Motor Vehicle Crash	11
Wires or Trees Down	13
Other Calls	17

As of Monday morning, four people were injured in vehicle crashes. The crews also responded mutual aid to a structure fire in Orting.

Backer reports that one fire engine was out of service for several hours after becoming stuck in the snow. “Crews had to remove snow from the road and sand by hand in order to get the engine back to a point where it could drive out on its own,” he said.

Firefighters have also been dispatched to calls for brush fires. “With over a foot of snow on the ground, that’s not a brush fire—it is arcing power lines,” Backer said. “Stay clear of downed power lines, as they may still be energized.”

Be careful shoveling snowy walks and driveways. Several studies have linked heart attacks to exertion from shoveling snow. “People with heart conditions and other medical problems should be careful to not overexert themselves if they try to shovel snow off their driveways and sidewalks,” said East Pierce Assistant Chief Russ McCallion.

Citizens are encouraged to be especially careful playing in the snow. According to East Pierce Assistant Chief James Jaques, the most common cold weather accident for our area is sledding mishaps. Emergency crews are

often called to the scene of an accident where someone has run into another person or a stationary object. "We see everything from broken limbs to head injuries," he said.

Be careful when shoveling snow. Believe it or not, several studies have linked heart attacks to exertion from shoveling snow. "People with heart conditions and other medical problems should be careful to not overexert themselves if they try to shovel snow off their driveways and sidewalks," said East Pierce Assistant Chief Russ McCallion.

Although ice rescues are less common, they do happen here. Fire officials warn against going out onto any lake or pond, especially Lake Tapps.

Unlike most bodies of water, Lake Tapps is not shaped like a big bowl, making it difficult to judge ice thicknesses even near the shoreline. The lake is especially dangerous if the water has been drawn down after it has frozen. Lowering the water beneath the ice can leave little or no support, causing the ice to fracture under the weight of a person.

Backer also warned that melting snow could lead to flooding. "Several areas of our district are prone to flooding and could be cut off if the flooding is severe enough, particularly South Prairie," he said. Pay attention to evacuation orders, should they become necessary.

For more winter weather tips, go to [www.eastpiercefirer.org](http://www.eastpiercefirer.org).

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