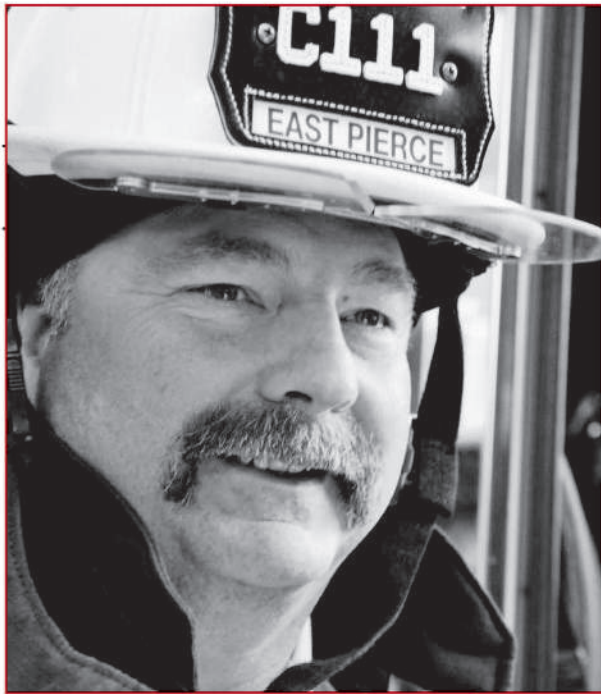




FIRE HOUSE NEWS

SERVING THE CITIZENS OF BONNEY LAKE, EDGEWOOD, MILTON, LAKE TAPPS, THE RIDGE COMMUNITIES, SOUTH PRAIRIE, SUMNER, TEHALEH AND SURROUNDING AREAS

FALL 2020



FROM THE CHIEF **Bud Backer**

As the number of COVID-19 cases in Pierce County continue to rise, East Pierce Fire & Rescue was impacted by the virus in the first week of August. Two members from the same fire station tested posi-

COVID-19 UPDATE

tive for the virus and were immediately isolated. As a precaution, nine additional members who were exposed to the positive employees were quarantined for a two week period.

All affected members have now been cleared and returned to duty. As you may imagine, having an entire shift at a single station in quarantine places a significant strain on resources. In order to maintain response capabilities, many firefighters were called back on overtime to fill the vacant positions (our firefighters really stepped up fill the gap!). Of course the unexpected overtime staffing will result in a spike in the overtime budget.

Please wear a mask when in public to protect others. It's entirely possible for someone to have the virus without knowing it (asymptomatic), and continue to spread it to others. You can help prevent the virus by wearing a face covering, hand-washing and social distancing. ■

FREE Mobile Testing

In an effort to support testing, EPFR partnered with Pierce County Emergency Management and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department to host two mobile testing sites within our jurisdiction in August at Bonney Lake High School and our South Prairie fire station.

Pierce County Emergency Management is working to schedule more mobile testing sites in our area. Watch our Facebook and Twitter pages for future Covid-19 testing announcements.

Testing through this source is free to anyone and no identification or insurance is needed.

#MaskUp

NEW FIRE ENGINES AND LADDER TRUCK

YOU CAN ALMOST SMELL THE NEW FIRE ENGINE SMELL!

Final inspections have been conducted and two new fire engines will have been delivered by the time this newsletter is published. These two of six fire engines on order will be assigned to Stations 111 in Bonney Lake and Station 112 in Prairie Ridge.

Once the engines have arrived, it will take a little more time to outfit them with equipment and ensure our fire-

fighters receive proper operational training.

Delivery of the new ladder truck is anticipated around the end of October. It will take several months to place it in service as the new style and technology requires extensive training for the firefighters that will operate it. ■

Two of EPFR's six new engines nearing completion at the Pierce manufacturing plant in Appleton, WI.



connect with us!



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Twitter: @EastPierceFire
Web: www.eastpiercfire.org
Headquarters: 253.863.1800

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HEALTH WATCH

FLU SEASON IS COMING—TIME TO GET VACCINATED

With widespread COVID-19 in the community, it's more important than ever this year to get vaccinated for the flu.

The flu season is expected to start later this fall in Washington State. If you don't normally get a flu vaccination each year, this would be a good year to start.

The local health system, including area hospitals and your East Pierce fire/EMS crews, could struggle this fall and winter to handle large numbers of seriously ill flu patients when added to an expected surge in COVID-19 patients.

Each year, East Pierce Fire & Rescue firefighter-paramedics transport seriously ill flu patients to local hospitals. Getting vaccinated against the flu is a crucial step in protecting yourself, family and friends.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), flu seasons are unpredictable and vary in severity. During the last decade the CDC estimates that between 12,000 and 61,000 people have died each year in the United States from flu-related complications. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of Americans are hospitalized each year during a severe season. As a result, the CDC recommends that everyone over six months of age should get vaccinated.

The flu (influenza) is a contagious respiratory disease. Common signs and symptoms include:

- ✓Headache ✓Sore throat
- ✓Fever ✓Cough ✓Fatigue
- ✓Muscle or body aches

Unfortunately, these initial signs and symptoms are similar to common COVID-19 signs and symptoms. Healthcare providers will be unable to determine which disease—flu or COVID-19 a patient has without diagnostic lab testing, which can lead to delays in care. Further complicating the issue, patients can become infected with the

flu and COVID-19 at the same time, leading to increased chances of hospitalization and death.

Occasionally, people may have vomiting and diarrhea when they have the flu, although this is more common in children. If you are experiencing nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, you may have a norovirus which is often mistaken for the flu. Unfortunately, diarrhea can be a symptom of COVID-19, also.

In most healthy people, the flu will go away in five to seven days. However, in some cases, the flu can result in a life-threatening illness.

Children under the age of five, pregnant women, seniors and people with chronic diseases, such as heart disease, asthma and emphysema, are at greatest risk for serious illness. In these patients, a flu infection can lead to pneumonia, sepsis or death.

Getting the flu vaccine continues to remain the cornerstone of preventing influenza. Every year scientists try to match the vaccine against the most probable strains of the influenza virus expected to appear and circulate during the flu season. The vaccines are inexpensive and covered by health insurance plans, usually with no co-pays.

Are there health risks from getting a flu vaccine? In short—no. Unfortunately, falsified research data was spread years ago linking vaccines to increased rates of autism in children. Reputable research organizations, hospitals and pediatricians have demonstrated that there is no link between autism and flu vaccines. Also, there is no live flu virus in flu vaccinations. Flu shots can't give you the flu.

Most experts recommend getting a flu vaccine in September or October. Even if you don't have a family doctor, most pharmacies can give the flu vaccine. The health department also distributes

When to call 9-1-1 for "the Flu":

If a person has flu-like symptoms (which could mimic COVID-19 symptoms) with the following "emergency warning signs," contact your physician or consider calling 9-1-1:

- Difficulty breathing or feeling short of breath
- Severe headache or stiff neck
- Sudden dizziness, confusion or trouble staying awake
- Children who are difficulty to arouse, not interacting, or who are irritable when being held
- Signs of dehydration (very dry mouth or no urination in more than 8 hours)
- Babies younger than 3 months with a high fever or any fever lasting more than 5 days.

free flu vaccines for children to medical providers throughout Pierce County.

If you're over age 65 talk to your provider, or pharmacist, about whether you should get the "high-dose" vaccine which is designed to elicit better immune responses in older persons.

"Vaccinated patients may sometimes still get the flu—but will often have less serious symptoms," says East Pierce Assistant Chief Russ McCallion. "Remember that it takes a full two weeks after getting the vaccine for antibodies to develop in the body to provide maximum protection." ■



Get Vaccinated



Help Stop the Spread of Flu Viruses



Take Antiviral Drugs if Prescribed

Lt. Eric McLeroy Retires

On August 20th, Lieutenant Eric McLeroy worked his last shift at Station 114 in Lake Tapps. Eric served the East Pierce communities for 31 years.

Lt. McLeroy began his fire service career as a volunteer firefighter with the Sumner Fire Department before becoming a career firefighter with the Bonney Lake Fire Department - which later became East Pierce Fire & Rescue.

Not only was Eric a dedicated officer

and member of the Water Rescue Special Operations Team, he also truly has a heart for public education. He originally started the Annual EPFR Open House in 1994 which grew over 26 years to become a community favorite event that focuses on fire and life safety activities, showcases the department's special operations teams, and features community partners.

Congratulations, Lt. McLeroy! We wish you the best on your retirement adventures! ■



Fire Chief Backer congratulates Lt. Eric McLeroy for his 31 years of dedicated service to the East Pierce communities.

Outdoor Burning: To Burn Or Not To Burn



Residential fire permits are available beginning October 1st in designated areas of the fire district.

Visit www.eastpiercefire.org for details to obtain a burn permit, regulations and burn area boundaries.

OR, take a **greener route!** Rather than burning, consider chipping, composting, mulching, or hauling excess yard debris to a local recycle/transfer station.



Did You Know?

Burning trash and burning in barrels is illegal in Washington State. Not to mention toxic and can yield hefty fines through Puget Sound Clean Air Agency.

COVID-19 vs. The Flu

Similarities & Differences — What Do We Know?

The flu and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses.

The flu is caused by a variety of influenza viruses, which often mutate into new strains, causing significant differences in the severity of illness and number of deaths experienced each year.

Because COVID-19 and the flu initially present with many similar signs and symptoms, many people have assumed that COVID-19 is “just a new type of flu”.

However, this is not true. **COVID-19 is not the flu.** COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new type of coronavirus, which is not part of the “influenza family”. And as we learn more about COVID-19, we are finding that the impact of this new disease on individuals is potentially much more serious.

Signs & Symptoms: Patients with the flu or COVID-19 often present with similar symptoms including a fever, cough, difficulty breathing, body aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, and a runny or stuffy nose.

However, one significant difference for COVID-19 patients is they often present with a change in, or loss of sense of taste and smell. This can be an early warning sign of COVID-19.

How long does it take for symptoms to appear after infection?

People with the flu typically have symptoms 1 to 4 days after infection. It often takes longer before COVID-19 patients to develop symptoms, with a range of 2 to 14 days (five days is most typical).

How long can someone spread the virus?

With the flu, most people are contagious (able to spread the virus) for about 24 hours before they show symptoms, and up to 7 days

after they become ill. Patients are usually most contagious in the initial 3 to 4 days of their illness.

With COVID-19, it appears that patients can be very contagious for 2 days before the onset of illness, peaking at the time symptoms develop, but remain infectious for up to 10 days after getting sick.

(Note: persons who are infected but never develop symptoms are equally contagious as persons who get sick, and can transmit COVID-19 for at least 10 days.)

How does it spread?

Both COVID-19 and the flu are spread from person to person, usually through large droplets carrying the virus, when infected people sneeze or cough. These droplets land in the mouth or nose of people who are in close contact (about six feet), or inhaled into the lungs, allowing the virus to spread. This is why face coverings (or masks) and social distancing of six feet is so important to tamp down the spread of COVID-19. These measures may help limit the spread of the flu this fall.

The virus may also be spread by touching surfaces or objects which have the virus on it and then touching your own mouth or nose. To limit spread through this method, experts recommend washing your hands frequently, along with disinfection of hard surfaces (i.e. door knobs, desks, etc.).

While there are similarities in how COVID-19 and the flu are spread, it does appear that COVID-19 is more infectious. COVID-19 also has more

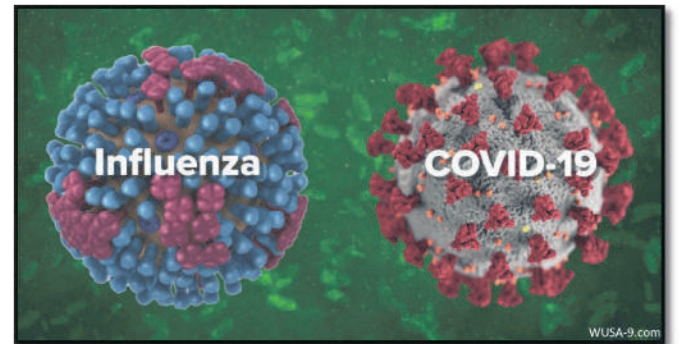
“superspreading” events in which large numbers of people, who are close together, can be infected at once.

Who is at High Risk for Severe Illness:

COVID-19 and the flu can cause severe illness, and even death, in “high risk” patients, including older adults, people with underlying medical conditions, such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and asthma, and pregnant people. Healthy children, who can have a high risk for flu complications, generally have lower risk for COVID-19 complications. However, children with underlying medical conditions can also be at high risk from COVID-19 illness.

Conclusion:

COVID-19 is not the flu. It’s a disease you want to avoid. Many



As of September, we have only eight months of experience with this new virus. Scientists and physicians are still learning about COVID-19. They’re getting better data on how COVID-19 is transmitted between people and determining the best strategies to limit its spread. Some scientists are trying to develop new, scientifically proven treatments for COVID-19 patients while others are working on more than 120 vaccines being developed around the world.

Much is still unknown. But as research results have come out, public health experts have had to modify their recommendations for how to combat COVID-19. This has been frustrating for many. Why all the changes? For example, we were told masks weren’t necessary, then they were.

Part of the scientific method means that as new data is obtained, recommendations need to change. For example, once it was determined that infected people without symptoms were playing a major role in spreading COVID-19, public health experts pushed for use of social distancing and wearing of masks when people are in public.

people who are infected with COVID-19 have relatively minor symptoms, and some have no symptoms at all. But an even larger number of people who acquire COVID-19 go on to develop serious signs and symptoms of illness. Overall, the fatality rate of people with COVID-19 is several times higher than those of people with the flu.

Unlike the flu, which is primarily respiratory in nature, COVID-19 appears to impact multiple organs throughout the body. People who survive COVID-19 may end up with permanent damage and scarring to their lungs. Other patients end up with serious heart-related infections which could compromise functioning of the heart for life. Other patients have developed kidney problems. Patients have developed large clots in their lungs or other parts of the body, resulting in the amputation of legs. Other patients report persistent brain issues termed the “COVID fog”.

We are going to have to cope with the flu and COVID-19 this fall and winter. Please do what you can to be safe. Face coverings, social distancing, washing your hands and disinfecting surfaces can protect you, your family and friends, and the community at large. **We’re all in this together!**



WHO IS EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE?

East Pierce Fire & Rescue was founded on a strong commitment to customer service. The department's *Mission, Vision and Values* guide the actions of the department and its employees. Exceptional customer service and a concern for the employees and their families have become hallmarks of our culture.

EPFR was created when the City of Bonney Lake Fire Department, Pierce County Fire District 22/Lake Tapps Fire and Pierce County Fire District 24 merged in 2000 with the goal of providing a seamless response to emergency situations.

Since then, the following mergers or annexations into EPFR have occurred:

- 2006: Pierce County Fire District 12 and South Prairie/Fire District 20
- 2008: Sumner/Fire District 1
- 2010: Edgewood/Fire District 8
- 2013: Milton Fire Department

Today, East Pierce serves a population of approximately 97,000 residents living in and around Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, the Ridge Communities, South Prairie, Tehaleh, Edgewood and Milton. The district covers approximately 153 square miles and protects residents from 9 stations—six staffed and two volunteer, and one facility on Lake Tapps for the marine rescue unit.

All full-time firefighters are cross-trained as either emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or paramedics and can respond to both medical emergencies and fires.

An independently-elected board of commissioners govern the agency. ■

COMMISSIONERS

- Dale Mitchell, Chair
- Jon Napier, Vice Chair
- Mike Cathey
- Ed Egan
- Kevin Garling
- Randy Kroum
- Pat McElligott

STAFFED STATIONS

- STATION 111 - BONNEY LAKE**
Headquarters Station
18421 Veterans Memorial Dr. E.
(253) 863-1800
- STATION 112 - PRAIRIE RIDGE**
12006 214th Ave. E.
- STATION 113 - SUMNER**
800 Harrison St.
- STATION 114 - LAKE TAPPS**
3206 W. Tapps Dr. E.
- STATION 116 - FOOTHILLS**
10515 234th Ave. E.
- STATION 118 - EDGEWOOD**
10105 24th St. E.

VOLUNTEER STATIONS

- Station 119 - South Prairie**
350 State Route 162
- Station 124 - Milton**
1000 Laurel St.



BLOOD DRIVES

Oct 1 | 1–5 PM

In Bonney Lake

SW Corner of Main Street
& Veterans Memorial Dr E
(Future EPFR Headquarters Station)

Oct 9 | 1–5 PM

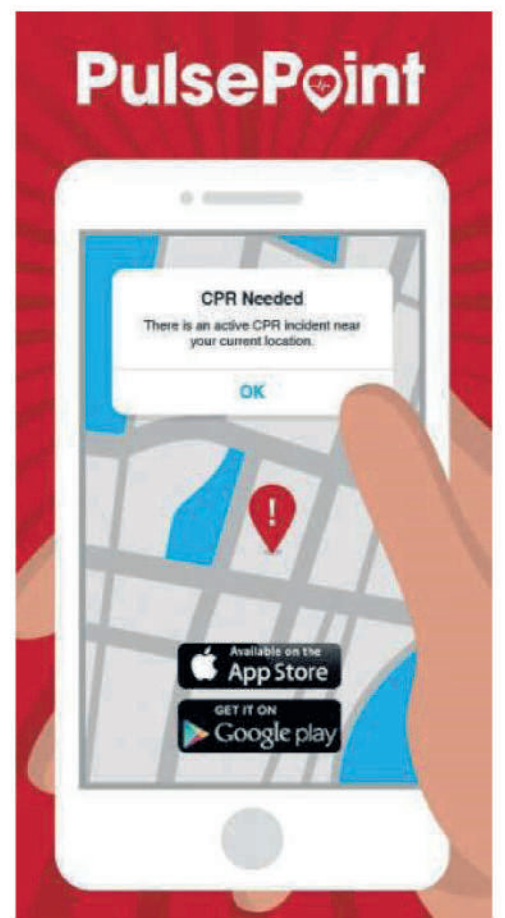
In Edgewood

EPFR Fire Station 118
10105 24th St E

**BLOOD DONORS
SAVE LIVES**



QUESTIONS? WWW.CRBS.NET



New Edgewood Fire Station 118 Coming Along

The review process has begun with the City of Edgewood for the new Fire Station 118 with hopes of acquiring initial permits in a couple of months.

As it turns out, the current fire station will need to be abandoned during construction. We have been working with the City of

Milton to temporarily house our firefighters and apparatus during the new fire station construction.

The plan includes housing the fire engine at the Milton Fire Station and the medic unit at the Milton Community Building.

Crews and apparatus will settle into their new 'house' as soon as

occupancy is approved for Edgewood's new Fire Station 118.



November 1st: Set your clock back 1 hour ...AND check your smoke alarms!

This is a great time to check your smoke alarm! Remember, many smoke alarms are now equipped with long-life lithium batteries that are intended to last the lifespan of the alarm...about 10 years. No matter what kind of battery you have, they need to be tested every month. Know your alarm! Know your battery!

- VIRTUAL -

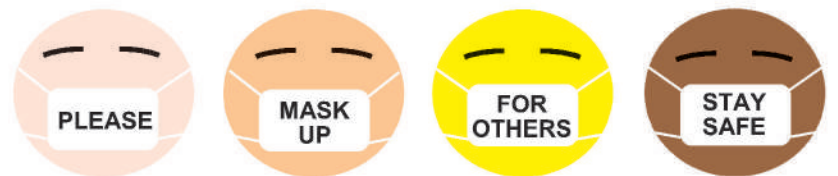
Fire Commissioner Meetings

Board of Fire Commissioner meetings continue to be held virtually via a webinar format. The meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. Agendas and links to the webinars are posted on our website by the end of the week prior to the meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

- October 20
- November 17
- December 15

Visit www.eastpiercefirer.org for webinar registration information.



Status of EPFR's Outreach Programs, Classes and Events

We're itching to resume our programs, but need to hold off a little longer to ensure social distancing. Please check our website at eastpiercefirer.org for updates.

CPR & FIRST AID CLASSES: Suspended until further notice.

SAFE SITTER CLASSES: Canceled for 2020.

CHILD SAFETY SEAT INSPECTIONS: Performed free for district residents via Facetime. Call 253-863-1800 Option 4 to schedule an appointment.

LIFE JACKET AND BIKE HELMET SALES: Suspended until further notice.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING CLASSES: Suspended until further notice.

SMOKE ALARM INSTALLATIONS: Suspended until further notice.

ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE: Canceled for 2020. Watch social media platforms for virtual activities in October.