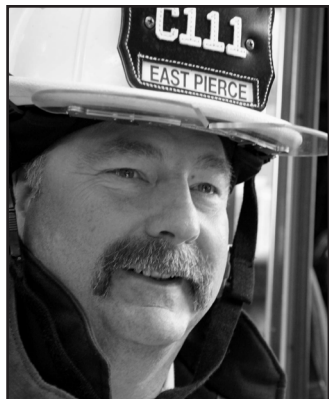




## EPFR to Place Levies on August 3rd Ballot



**FROM THE CHIEF**  
**Bud Backer**

East Pierce Fire & Rescue last lifted our levy rates in 2017, when voters approved lifting the “lids” back to the previously approved statutory maximums. These maximum collection rates are \$0.50 for the EMS levy and \$1.50 for the regular levy, per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

This year we are in the last year of the 10-year EMS levy and must renew it or lose it. The EMS levy accounts for 25% of our tax revenue. We will be asking voters to reauthorize the EMS levy for another ten years. At the same time, we will ask voters to lift or reset our regular levy collection rate to the previously approved rate.

Collection rates decrease as assessed values increase to limit the growth rate of property taxes.

The EMS Levy funds the provision of Advanced Life Support, or Paramedic level, emergency medical care.

Yes, we do bill your insurance company for the cost of transporting a patient to the hospital, but we do not bill district residents the cost of your co-pay or out-of-pocket expense. There are no out-of-pocket expenses for our citizens. People living outside the fire district who use our services are billed because they do not pay taxes to support the system.

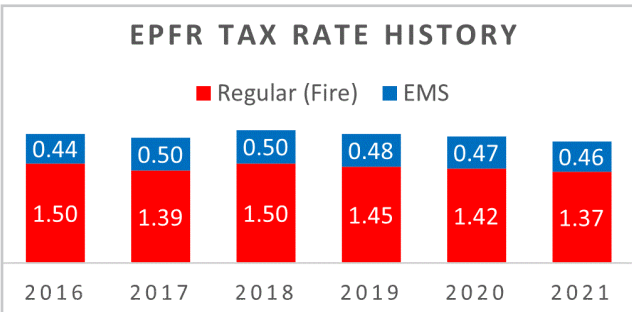
The EMS levy guarantees that the district residents pay no out-of-pocket expenses for the cost of treatment and transport to a hospital. When someone calls 9-1-1 for medical assistance, they mustn’t worry about the cost of the emergency care that we deliver. In the past, people have sadly not called 9-1-1 when they needed help, as they were concerned about paying for the cost of treatment and transport. Not calling 9-1-1 when you need help can have devastating effects.

For a list of FAQs about the EMS Levy, see our web page at [www.eastpiercefire.org](http://www.eastpiercefire.org).

These are not new taxes but a reauthorization to collect the previously approved statutory limit.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue is one of the few career fire districts in Pierce County that does not operate with an additional Maintenance & Operations Levy or Benefit Charge. We have worked to provide services within the total of \$2.00 per thousand collection rate. Even at that limit, we have improved staffing at current fire stations, providing improved public and firefighter safety.

Why do we need the Regular and EMS Levies? The two levies provide the funding for daily operations - the firefighters and medics that come to your need when you call 9-1-1. The Bond Issue passed in 2018 does not fund operational costs.



## Mitchell Retires, 32 Years

Board Chair Dale Mitchell retired in February after 32 years of service as a Fire Commissioner with East Pierce Fire & Rescue. Commissioner Mitchell began as a Fire Commissioner with Pierce County Fire District 8 in Edgewood, which annexed into EPFR in 2010.

Because Fire Commissioners typically serve 6-year terms, it is rare to see someone commit as long as Dale did. He truly cared for this community and gave a lifetime of service to include his career as a teacher and school principal. During his time as a Fire Commissioner, Mitchell participated on countless fire service committees at the county and state levels.



*Fire Commissioner Dale Mitchell retires after 32 years of dedicated service.*

In recognition of Mitchell’s dedicated and tireless service, the Board of Fire Commissioners resolved at the regular meeting in February to name the new fire station in Edgewood *The Dale Mitchell Fire Station 118*.

The Board has begun the process to select an appointee to fill Mitchell’s vacancy. Six candidates have expressed interest in the position. The appointment will fill the vacancy for the remainder of this year, then will be placed on the November ballot for the rest of the six-year term. ■

See **LEVIES**, page 3

## Community Survey

**PLEASE TAKE OUR COMMUNITY SURVEY!**

East Pierce Fire & Rescue is planning for the future by creating a strategic plan. We would appreciate your feedback on our services and input on how we should focus our efforts in the coming years.



English

← Please take our brief 8-question survey.  
← To access the survey, point your cell phone camera at the QR code.

### Por favor, ¡responda nuestra encuesta comunitaria!

East Pierce Fire & Rescue (EPFR) está planificando para el futuro mediante la creación de un plan estratégico. Agradeceríamos que nos cuente cuáles son sus comentarios acerca de nuestros servicios y en qué considera que deberíamos enfocarnos durante los próximos años.

Responda nuestra breve encuesta de 8 preguntas.  
Para acceder a la encuesta, apunte la cámara de su teléfono celular al código QR.



Español

## Capital Projects Update

Building projects, like many things, were slowed some by the impacts of COVID-19. But we are getting close to the real work beginning. We hope to have permits in hand and go to bid for the Station 118 project in Edgewood by the end of April. Crews will temporarily relocate to Milton during construction and return to Edgewood upon completing the new station in 2022.

Similarly, Station 111/Headquarters in Bonney Lake is moving forward with an anticipated project bid in early July.

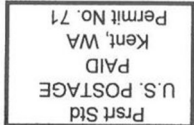
Design work is well underway for the new Station 114 in Lake Tapps at the current location on W. Tapps Drive E., and work continues to acquire land for the new Station 112 in the Ridge Communities.

Two of our new fire engines are in service, and firefighters are currently training with the new ladder truck. Two additional new engines should arrive mid-year, with the last two in September or October. These new suppression units provide a desperately needed critical upgrade.

Funding for all of these projects is made possible by the 2018 Bond Issue approved by voters. We thank you for providing us the necessary equipment and facilities so that we may better serve you. ■



*Edgewood's new Station 118 project anticipated to bid at the end of April 2021.*



Postal Customer  
ECRWSS



HEALTH WATCH

Chest Pain or Discomfort?  
When In Doubt, Check It Out!

EMERGENCY  
DIAL 911

Forty years ago, treatment for heart attack victims was limited to supportive care. If a heart attack didn't kill a patient, it often left the patient with permanent damage to the heart and life-long disabilities. It was a struggle to even climb a flight of stairs for some survivors without becoming short of breath.

Now, advanced treatments provided by hospitals with specialized cardiac care centers, such as Good Samaritan Hospital and Auburn Regional Medical Center, can often stop a heart attack in its tracks and minimize long-term damage to the heart. But these treatments are most effective when initiated in the first few hours after the onset of the signs and symptoms of a possible heart attack.

Many people, however, either fail to recognize the signs and symptoms of a heart attack, or they take a "wait and see" approach, delaying the time it takes to receive potentially life-saving medical treatment.

Some patients don't call 9-1-1 because they are unsure if their pain, discomfort, or other symptoms are related to a heart attack or other significant medical problem. "People are often in a state of denial or don't want to cause a scene," according to East Pierce Assistant Chief Russ McCallion.

As a result, patients with heart attacks often wait between two and four hours after they first start experiencing symptoms of a heart attack before calling 9-1-1. Many heart attack patients drive themselves to the hospital, or loved ones take them to an Emergency Department.

"We'd rather be called and have it not be a heart attack than have patients delay calling 9-1-1," said East Pierce Emergency Medical Services Battalion Chief Brad Dyson. He continues that

in CPR and First Aid classes provided to the public, firefighter and paramedic instructors stress the motto "When in Doubt, Check It Out!"

Any delay can be critical since the risk of sudden cardiac arrest, in which the heart stops and requires CPR, is most significant during the first few hours of a heart attack. According to McCallion, every hour of delay can worsen the short and long-term recovery and chances of survival for a heart attack patient.

It is crucial that patients do not hesitate to call 9-1-1 if they are worried that they may be having a heart attack (or any other potentially serious medical emergency), rather than simply driving themselves to local hospitals. East Pierce firefighters and paramedics are part of an outstanding Pierce County emergency cardiac care system. East Pierce crews interpret 12 Lead electrocardiograms (ECGs), provide early advanced care for chest pain and breathing issues, and if necessary, defibrillate patients to "jump start" the hearts of patients if they collapse into cardiac arrest.

East Pierce firefighters work as part of a collaborative team with local hospitals to provide award-winning cardiac care. Paramedics on scene provide "cardiac alerts" to local hospitals reducing the crucial time between the first contact with East Pierce firefighters and definitive treatment by hospital cardiologists in the cath lab.

"Our goal", said McCallion, "is to cut every minute possible between the time a patient's heart attack symptoms begin and when treatment is initiated by opening up a blocked cardiac artery which is causing the heart attack."

With early "cardiac alerts" called in by the East Pierce paramedic crews, patients are seen much

Heart Attack Warning Signs

For some patients, heart attacks are sudden and intense, just like on TV and in the movies. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort.

Call 9-1-1 if you experience these warning signs:

- **Chest pain or discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest which lasts beyond a few minutes. The pain can come and go. The discomfort can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or indigestion.
- **Discomfort or pain in other parts of the upper body.** Patients may have pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.**
- **Other signs** may include a "cold sweat", nausea, weakness, or lightheadedness.

Women are often less likely to experience chest pain or discomfort, leading to patients delaying calling 9-1-1 and access to medical care. Typical heart attack warning signs for women include "indigestion", shortness of breath, dizziness, and sweatiness.

more quickly by the cardiologists and their teams. "When every minute counts, it makes sense to call 9-1-1", said McCallion. Additionally, Dyson noted there are no out-of-pocket costs for East Pierce residents who call 9-1-1 and are transported by East Pierce medic units to the hospital. "It's what we are here for," said Dyson. ■

Preventing a Dryer Fire at Home

Taking care of your clothes dryer is essential to preventing a fire in your home. Unfortunately, dryer fires are more common than you might think. According to the National Fire Protection Association and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, U.S. fire departments respond to more than 15,000 home fires involving clothes dryers each year. These fires result in annual losses estimated at 13 deaths, 440 injuries, and \$238 million in property damage.

So, what can go wrong? As clothes dry, lint collects and builds up within the dryer and the ventilation duct to the outside reducing airflow, which can cause the dryer to work extra hard and overheat resulting in a fire. Other problems that can contribute to dryer fires are a lack of maintenance, plac-



- ing inappropriate items in the dryer, incorrect installation, and inadequate venting.
- Here are some simple things to help prevent dryer fires and keep your family and home safe.
- Keep the lint screen in place and clear. The lint screen prevents the majority of lint from getting into your dryer's ventilation system. Drying new towels, heavy blankets, or items made from fleece, wool, or other fuzzy materials, may increase lint, so beware and clean the lint screen more often.
  - Keep your dryer's ventilation system clean. You can usually disconnect the duct yourself and vacuum it out. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for disconnecting and cleaning the duct and vent.
  - Ensure the outdoor back-draft damper (vent flaps) opens appropriately when the dryer is operating. A screen is not allowed since it would trap lint.
  - Keep the area around your dryer clean. Vacuum any lint from under and behind your dryer and avoid placing anything on top of it.
  - Protect the venting system behind the dryer from being damaged, crushed, or restricted. Use rigid,

See DRYER, page 4

East Pierce Receives Community Player Award

The Chamber Collective announced in early April their 2020 Chamber Awards. East Pierce Fire & Rescue is honored and humbled to be the recipient of the Community Player Award!



The Chamber Collective presents the Community Player Award to EPFR.

"2020 was a challenging year, from the rise of a global pandemic, Sumner Grade Fire, and just overall need. This year first responders held an even more valuable role of keeping our communities safe. You and your team showed up with compassion and dedication. From helping kids in the schools to fighting fires to save our communities. This award recognizes your hard work and determination to engage with our community with compassion. You truly do model Where Compassion and Action Meet." - The Chamber Collective

The Chamber Collective is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization committed to working with area leaders to improve market activity and community livability. The Chamber Collective is open to chambers in the Bonney Lake region, including Sumner, Buckley, Enumclaw, Lake Tapps, Lakeland Hills, Tehaleh and Orting. Visit thechambercollective.com for more information. ■



# Understanding the Home Ignition Zone?

How you can help make your home safer from embers and radiant heat during a wildfire.

The concept of the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) was developed by a retired USDA Forest Service fire scientist in the late 1990s, following some breakthrough experimental research into how homes ignite due to the effects of radiant heat. The HIZ is divided into three zones.

### IMMEDIATE ZONE

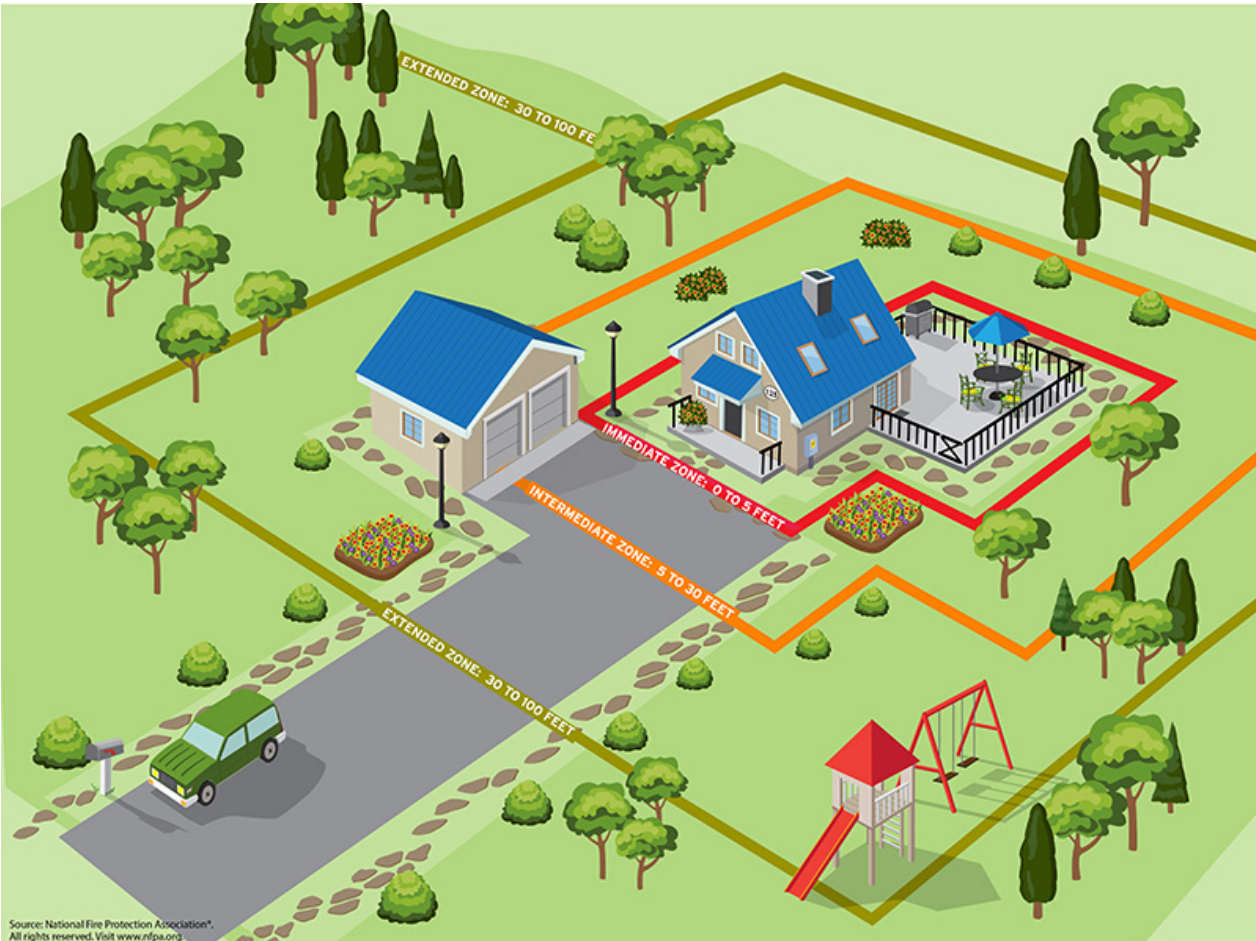
The home and 0-5 feet around the home, defined as a non-combustible area, is the most important zone to take immediate action on as it is the most vulnerable to embers. Start with the house itself then move into the landscaping section of the Immediate Zone.

- ✓ Clean roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris and pine needles that could catch embers.
- ✓ Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles to prevent ember penetration.
- ✓ Reduce embers that could pass through vents in the eaves by installing 1/8 inch metal mesh screening.
- ✓ Clean debris from exterior attic vents and install 1/8 inch metal mesh screening to reduce embers.
- ✓ Repair or replace damaged or loose window screens and any broken windows.
- ✓ Remove anything stored underneath decks or patios, and screen or box-in these areas with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- ✓ Move any flammable material away from wall exteriors - mulch, flammable plants, leaves and needles, firewood piles - anything that can burn.

### INTERMEDIATE ZONE

5-30 feet around the home. Landscaping/hardscaping to help influence and decrease fire behavior.

- ✓ Clear vegetation from under large stationary propane tanks.
- ✓ Create fuel breaks with driveways, walkways/paths, patios and decks.



- ✓ Keep lawns and native grasses mowed to a height of four inches.
- ✓ Remove ladder fuels (vegetation under trees) so a surface fire cannot reach the tree crowns. Prune trees up to 6-10' from the ground; for shorter trees do not exceed 1/3 of the overall tree height.
- ✓ Tree placement should be planned to ensure the mature canopy is no closer than 10' to the edge of a structure.
- ✓ Tree and shrubs in this zone should be limited to small clusters of a few each to break the continuity of vegetation across the landscape.

### EXTENDED ZONE

30-100 feet, out to 200 feet. Landscaping - the goal here is not to eliminate fire but to interrupt fire's path and keep flames smaller and on the ground.

- ✓ Dispose of heavy accumulations of ground litter debris.
- ✓ Remove dead plant and tree material.
- ✓ Remove small conifers growing between mature trees.
- ✓ Remove vegetation adjacent to storage sheds or other outbuildings within this area.

To learn more, visit [Firewise.org](https://www.firewise.org). ■



EMPLOYEE *Spotlight*

**BRYON CHINN** | Mechanic

Bryon joined the EPFR team in May 2018 and brought along his toolbox full of credentials specializing in heavy-duty fleet maintenance, including Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT), Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), and Pierce Master certifications.

In addition to keeping our heavy-duty fleet (10 engines, a ladder truck, a tender, and 2 brush trucks) in tip-top condition, Bryon consistently saves the district money by preventing about 60% of minor issues from becoming significant issues that could require costly service from outside vendors.

Be sure to wave if you see Bryon driving throughout the district in his big, white Logistics truck!

## LEVIES, cont. from page 1

The bond is limited to capital projects and is committed to building five fire stations and upgrading our emergency vehicles. By state law, we cannot use it for operational costs such as hiring firefighters.

Resetting the collection rate on both levies should put the district in a position to begin adding firefighters to staff the new station in Tehaleh and place a medic unit in Milton.

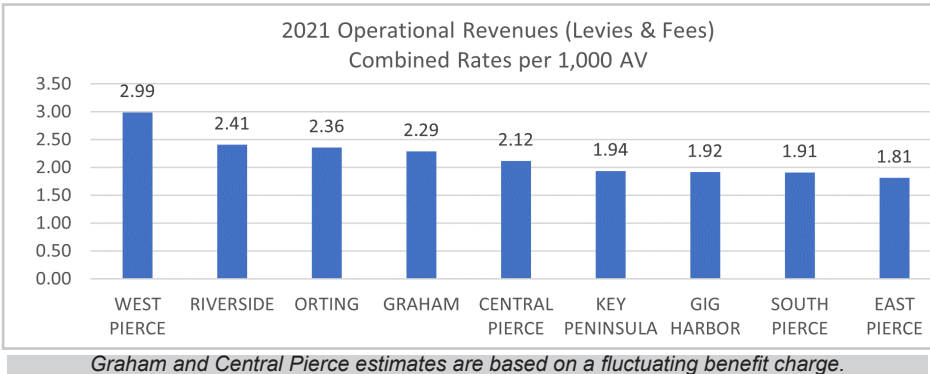
Population growth continues to drive an increase in services. COVID-19 produced a downturn in 2020, but overall trends are on track to increase as people move into our beautiful communities. To meet these demands, we must add resources to our response capability through the means of additional staffed fire stations. We can only add more firefighters if we can collect at our

statutory limit, totaling \$2.00/\$1,000 combined with the Regular and EMS levies.

People often ask, "what about new construction?" New construction does add to the tax rolls, but the funds generated are just enough to keep the overall operations budget even with the cost of living inflation.

How does EPFR compare to other Pierce County fire districts? EPFR remains the most cost-effective career-based fire district in the county. The graph to the right provides the combined totals of EMS and Regular Levies, in addition to M&O Levies and Benefit Charges used by the dif-

ferent departments to fund annual operations. For more information or to schedule a meeting or discussion with your group, HOA, or other organization, please email [Chief@eastpiercefirer.org](mailto:Chief@eastpiercefirer.org). ■





# 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 concern for 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 97,500 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 8 stations - six staffed and one 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

Jon Napier, Chair  
Edward Egan, Vice Chair  
Mike Cathey  
Kevin Garling  
Randy Kroum  
Pat McElligott  
Vacant Position TBD

## 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 Station

**Station 119 - South Prairie**  
350 State Route 162

# East Pierce Recognizes Outstanding Service

Congratulations to EPFR's 2020 Annual Recognition Awards recipients! Commissioners and command staff honored recipients at the Commissioner Meeting on April 20.

Recipients are voted on by their peers through a nomination and ballot process. The only award not chosen this way is Chief's Company. The command staff selects the recipients of that award based on leadership skills.

Two awards honor former members. The Ken Thawsh Inspirational Award is dedicated to a beloved former volunteer firefighter who's selfless acts of kindness will continue to inspire and motivate our volunteer ranks.

The Mike Roberts Goodwill Award is dedicated to a retired lieutenant who always went above and beyond for the wellbeing of others by exhibiting genuine acts of goodwill.

Join us in congratulating these exceptional people for providing compassionate service and rapid response to our community. ■



EPFR's 2020 Employee Recognition Awards were presented during the April 20 Commissioner Meeting.

- ### Award Honorees

**Career Officer**  
Captain Shawn Wagner

**Career Firefighter**  
Firefighter Bryan Mueller

**EMS Provider**  
Lieutenant-Paramedic  
Jeff Berry

**Volunteer Responder**  
Firefighter Tim Balding

**Mike Roberts Goodwill Award**  
Firefighter-Paramedic Rex Orcutt

**Ken Thawsh Inspirational Award**  
Firefighter Tim Balding

**Support Staff**  
Mechanic Bryon Chinn

**Fitness Award**  
Firefighter Andrew Craig

**Chiefs Company**  
Captain Dan Curtis,  
Firefighter Corey Snipe,  
Firefighter-Paramedic  
Jeff Lachowitz, and  
Firefighter Tim Balding

2020 Calls By Type	Emergency Medical Calls.....	7,899
	Good Intent.....	1,239
	Public Assist .....	947
	False Alarm.....	521
	Fire .....	313
	Hazardous Materials.....	223
	Other.....	21
	<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>11,163</b>

## 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.

**DRYER**, cont. from page 2

smooth metal ducts and avoid potentially flammable plastic or foil piping.

- Play it safe and split up larger loads into two smaller loads to help clothes dry faster. Larger loads, especially soaking wet, take longer to dry and may overheat the dryer.
- Never place foam, rubber, or plastic items in the dryer. Never attempt to dry oily or greasy rags.
- Do not run your dryer when you are not home, or you are going to bed.

Refer to your owner's manual if you experience any of these. Call a service professional if the problem persists. If you see smoke or fire, evacuate the house and call 911.

Clothes dryer fire safety begins with the installation. Ensuring the dryer and its exhaust system adhere to both applicable codes and manufacturer's instructions is very important to keep the flammable lint moving through the exhaust

pipe and discharging out of the house. The code requirements help ensure that moisture does not stay inside the house, promoting hazardous mold and wood rot.

### Watch for These Warning Signs:

- You smell burning in your laundry room.
- Your laundry room is more humid than usual.
- The outside of your dryer gets very hot.
- Your clothes are hotter than normal when you take them out of the dryer.
- Drying your clothes takes longer than usual (or they don't dry thoroughly).
- Your outdoor dryer vent doesn't open fully when your dryer is running (this could mean the exhaust isn't coming out fast enough because of a clog).

With proper installation and maintenance of your clothes dryer and its exhaust system, you will increase the safety of your family, you, and your home. ■

### connect with us!

Facebook: @eastpiercefirerescue  
Twitter: @EastPierceFire

### 2021 Commissioner Meeting Schedule

Visit [eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://eastpiercefirerescue.org) for meeting details.

May 18  
June 15  
July 20  
August 17  
September 21  
October 19  
November 16  
December 21