



FIRE HOUSE NEWS

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

WINTER 2022

BOND UPDATE: Station 118 Takes Shape

In November 2018, voters approved a bond used to replace all six frontline East Pierce Fire & Rescue fire engines, a ladder truck, replace four fire stations, and build a new fire station in Tehaleh. Many projects slowed due to COVID impacts but are once again moving along.

- Station 117/Tehaleh: Late fall 2022.
- Station 112/Prairie Ridge: Spring 2023.

Thank you for providing us with the equipment and facilities to serve you better! ■



Architectural rendering of the new Station 118.

Below is a brief snapshot of the status of these projects.

VEHICLE STATUS

- Ladder 113 and Engines 111, 112, 114, 116, and 118 are received and in-service.

FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION STATUS

- Station 118/Edgewood: Under construction.
- Station 111/Bonney Lake: Spring 2022.
- Station 114/Lake Tapps: Summer 2022.



The new Fire Station 118 in Edgewood is taking shape! Most of the groundwork is done, walls going up, and footings for the apparatus bay are being set.

EPFR Easter Events Return!

East Pierce firefighters are excited to once again sponsor three annual Easter Egg Hunts around the fire district on Saturday, April 16. All three events are free. Firefighters will also accept food and monetary donations for the area food banks.

SUMNER

The 30th Annual Sumner Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by East Pierce Firefighters Local 3520, will be held at Sunset Stadium, 1707 Main Street. Children ages 1-3 years will be allowed on the field at 9 a.m., followed by 4-7-year-olds at 10 a.m., then 9-11-year-olds at 11 a.m.

SOUTH PRAIRIE

Join the East Pierce Volunteer Firefighters' Association for the 63rd Annual South Prairie Easter Egg Hunt. The free event starts at 10 a.m. at the South Prairie City Park located at Third and Tacoma Streets.

EDGEWOOD

The annual Edgewood Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by Local 3520, starts at 10 a.m. at Edgemont Park, located adjacent to Edgemont Junior High School at 24th Street East and 110th Avenue East. Come early. Parking is limited.



Firefighters Provide Cozy Coats for Kids

East Pierce firefighters again teamed up with the Coats for Kids Foundation for the annual Operation Warm, an effort to provide new coats to kids in the community who would otherwise not have one.

In December, firefighters visited

ten schools throughout the fire district to fit more than 250 children with a much needed new, cozy coat.

The East Pierce Firefighter's Local 3520 funds the cost of the coats through donations. The Local purchases the jackets from the Coats

for Kids Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization established in Alexandria, VA in 2004. It is the distribution partner of Operation Warm, Inc.

"We often are asked if we accept coat donations for this event, however we cannot," says East Pierce Lieutenant Troy Sterrenburg. "All of the coats come from the Coats for Kids Foundation, so we need monetary donations to make this possible." The Local is accepting donations from corporate sponsors and individual donors.

To make a donation, go to www.operationwarm.org. ■



East Pierce firefighters fitted more than 250 children in ten schools throughout the fire district with much needed warm coats.



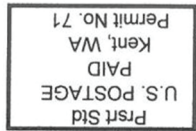
Hop on by our Easter Egg Hunts, Saturday, April 16, sponsored by East Pierce firefighters.

2021 Total Emergency Calls

Your EPFR firefighters responded to **12,491** calls last year, **up 12.1% from 2020**. For more statistics, the 2021 Annual Report is viewable at east-piercefirer.org.

CALL TYPE	Emergency Medical Calls	8,811
	*Good Intent	1,334
	Public Assist	1,171
	False Alarm.....	613
	Fire	318
	Hazardous Materials.....	223
	Other.....	21
	Total Emergency Calls	12,491

* No emergency found, such as steam mistaken for smoke, wrong address given, controlled burn, etc.



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"Where Compassion and Action Meet"

FROM THE CHIEF

JON PARKINSON

Happy (belated) New Year! Just like that, 2021 is gone, and 2022 is off and rolling. I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments of East Pierce Fire & Rescue over the last year; below is just a small snapshot of what we've been working on:

Strategic Plan: The Board of Fire Commissioners unanimously approved adopting a strategic plan. This plan will guide the district for the next five years. Visit www.eastpiercefirerest.org to view the strategic plan.

Staffing Levels: The district eliminated the last two-person fire engines in July. All fire engines and ladder trucks are staffed with a minimum of three firefighters at all times. This critical change is important to both citizen and firefighter safety.

EMS Levy: In August, voters approved the renewal of the EMS tax levy for another ten years. This levy funds ALS-paramedic level care and medical transport to area hospitals with no out-of-pocket cost for EPFR residents.

Budget: In November, the district



adopted the 2022 operating budget. I am pleased to report that the budget was limited to an increase of 1.17% over 2021, resulting in a \$15 per year increase to the average homeowner in the district.

In 2022, East Pierce Fire & Rescue will have no shortage of accomplishments. As the year moves on, we will continue to share updates. You can always keep up to date by following us on social media via Facebook and Twitter, as well as the district website at www.eastpiercefirerest.org.

On behalf of the district, I would like to thank you all for entrusting us with protecting the community. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated! ■

Public Education Programs Cautiously Resume

Finally! The scaling back of COVID-19 precautions (at least when this article was written) allows some of our public education programs to ramp up. We've been chomping at the bit to engage with you again (on a non-emergent level)!

HELMET SALES

The wearer must be present for custom fitting. Bike Helmets: \$8 ea. Multi-Sport: \$11 ea. Available at Headquarters Station during business hours.

LIFE JACKET SALES

The wearer must be present for custom fitting. Life Jacket: \$14 ea. Available at Headquarters Station during business hours.

CPR & FIRST AID CLASSES

Public classes are anticipated to resume soon. Check www.eastpiercefirerest.org for class status and to register.

SMOKE ALARM INSTALLATIONS

Anticipated to resume soon. Includes smoke alarm equipped with 10-year battery. Call (253) 863-1800 (press Option 4) to inquire about status.

SAFE SITTER CLASSES

Anticipated to resume soon. Check www.eastpiercefirerest.org for class status and to register.

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.



HEALTH WATCH

Chest Pain or Heart Attack Symptoms? When In Doubt...Check It Out! *For heart attack patients, getting help early saves lives.*

Every year, East Pierce firefighters and paramedics respond to hundreds of 9-1-1 calls in the district for people with signs and symptoms of heart attacks. Our fire/EMS crews are part of a well-integrated, sophisticated care system.

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, minimizing the chances of long-term damage to the heart. But these treatments are most effective when initiated in the first few hours of the onset of the signs and symptoms of a possible heart attack.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people with heart attack symptoms delayed calling 9-1-1 because of concerns about their safety if they went to the hospital. Some people didn't ever call 9-1-1 and took a "wait and see" approach delaying the time it took to get potentially life-saving treatment. As a result, EPFR crews responded to a record 50% increase in patients collapsing into cardiac arrest at home.

Your EPFR firefighters want to make sure you can recognize the signs and symptoms of a heart attack. It's not always obvious—no matter what you see on TV. If you're not sure—call 9-1-1.

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 lasting more than 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, or light-headedness.

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

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.

Even before COVID-19 interrupted our lives, patients with heart attacks often wait-

ed between two and four hours after the start of heart attack symptoms before calling 9-1-1. Now, delays often extend many hours. And many heart attack patients still drive themselves to the hospital or are taken in by a family member to a hospital emergency department.

"We would rather be called and have it turn out not to be a heart attack than have patients delay calling 9-1-1," said East Pierce EMS Battalion Chief Brad Dyson. "During our CPR and First Aid classes provided for the public, firefighter and paramedic instructors continually emphasize "When in Doubt, Check It Out!" continues Dyson.

Any delay can be critical since the risk of sudden cardiac arrest, in which the heart stops and CPR is required, is greatest 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.

Patients should call 9-1-1 if they

See **HEALTH WATCH** page 4

Safely Disposing of Unwanted & Expired Medicines

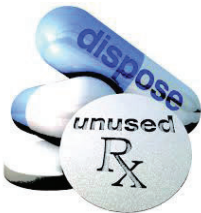
Medicines play an important role in treating many conditions and diseases, but it’s important to dispose of them properly when they are no longer needed.

Medicine disposal programs are an excellent way to remove expired, unwanted, or unused medicines from home and reduce the chance that others may accidentally take a medication.

To help provide safe disposal alternatives and reduce pollution to the environment, both Edgewood and Bonney Lake Police Departments will host free drug take-back events next month.

MEDICINE TAKE-BACK EVENTS:

- **April 23 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.**
at **Northwood Elementary School**
9805 24th St. E., Edgewood
Hosted by Edgewood Police Dept.
- **April 30 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**
at the **Bonney Lake Public Safety Bldg.**
18421 Veterans Memorial Dr. E., Bonney Lake
Hosted by Bonney Lake Police Dept.



Can’t make the scheduled events? No worries! Medicine disposal bins are conveniently located in Edgewood, Bonney Lake, and Sumner Police Departments (call ahead to confirm lobby hours).

The scheduled take-back events and the disposal bins

are easy to use - no forms, no paperwork, no fuss. Just drop off your unwanted or expired medicines.

Before you drop off your medications, consolidate pills to make bottles full, or put them into a sealed Zip-lock bag. Blister packs can be left intact. Remember to remove labels containing personal information.

Any dosage and form of medications are accepted except for those identified below.

- ✗ Herbal remedies
- ✗ Vitamins/supplement
- ✗ Cosmetics/personal care products
- ✗ Medical devices
- ✗ Batteries
- ✗ Mercury-containing thermometers
- ✗ Sharps
- ✗ Illicit drugs
- ✗ Pet pesticide products

To find more medication disposal locations or to download medication poison prevention tips, visit www.eastpiercefirer.org. ■



Here are a few safety tips to help keep your family safe and prevent medicine-related poisonings.

Medication Safety Tips

- ✓ Use child-resistant containers. Keep in mind they are not “childproof”, but slow the time it takes for a child to open a medicine bottle.
- ✓ Keep all medicines in their original labeled container. When medication and other products are put into another container, poisonings tend to occur.
- ✓ Store medicines out of sight and reach of children, and put a lock or child-safety latch on cabinet drawers and doors.
- ✓ Clean out the medicine cabinet regularly. Dispose of old medications appropriately and do not throw medicines in garbage or flush down the toilet.
- ✓ Call medicines what they are - medicine. Calling it candy can confuse a child with a craving for something sweet.

Carbon Monoxide - The Silent Killer

Winter in the northwest and power outages often go hand-in-hand, prompting alternative power sources such as generators. Although generators help provide a welcome comfort during extreme conditions, they also pose a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is known as the “silent killer.” You cannot see it, smell it, or taste it. According



to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 430 people die in the U.S. from accidental CO poisoning each year.

Generators aren’t the only culprits. Other CO producing products include faulty, improperly used, or incorrectly vented fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces, stoves, water heaters, and fireplaces.

As of 2013, Washington State law requires CO alarms to be installed

in all residences. They should be placed outside each separate sleeping area on each level of the home.

To protect your family from CO poisoning, East Pierce Fire & Rescue urges residents to:

- Always use generators outside, away from doors, windows, and vents. Never in enclosed or partially enclosed areas, even with ventilation.
- Install and maintain CO alarms inside your home to provide early warning. Choose a CO alarm

that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Although CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms, combination CO and smoke alarms are permitted.

- Know the difference between the sounds of smoke and CO alarms. Sound the alarm and practice your home escape plan with your family, so they become familiar with the sounds.

Visit www.eastpiercefirer.org for more safety tips and information on Washington’s carbon monoxide safety law. ■

EMPLOYEE Spotlight



JEN KILLION // COMMUNITY RESOURCE PARAMEDIC

Jen joined EPFR as a Firefighter/Paramedic in 2006, and in 2018 developed a Community Resource Paramedic (CRP) program for the district (and the first CRP program in Pierce County!). Through referrals from our firefighters, Jen reaches out to individuals in our community who are struggling with chronic health problems or have social service needs.

Jen works with a broad support network of agencies in Pierce County. She connects our citizens with resources, often helping them avoid a 9-1-1 call or trip to the hospital. The ultimate goal is to help improve the quality of life for the individual, keep our fire engines and medic units available for urgent 911 calls, and reduce strain on our hospitals over-burdened by COVID.

Jen loves her work and appreciates the opportunity to make a difference. She’s looking forward to adding a Behavioral Health Specialist in April to have even more opportunities to help our community!

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 100,508 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
Cynthia Wernet

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 124 - Milton
1000 Laurel St.

Volunteer Station

Station 119 - South Prairie
350 State Route 162

East Pierce Recognizes Outstanding Service

Congratulations to EPFR's 2021 Annual Recognition Awards recipients! Commissioners and command staff plan to formally honor recipients this spring.

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. ■



Congratulations to EPFR's 2021 Employee Recognition Awards recipients!

Award Honorees

- Career Officer**
Lieutenant Troy Davidson
- Career Firefighter**
Firefighter Jared Snope
- EMS Provider**
Firefighter-Paramedic
Patience Taylor
- Volunteer Responder**
Firefighter DeAnn O'Leary
- Mike Roberts Goodwill Award**
Lt. Jeff Berry & FF James Parke
- Ken Thawsh Inspirational Award**
Firefighter DeAnn O'Leary
- Support Staff**
Mechanic Bryon Chinn
- Fitness Award**
Firefighter Andrew Craig
- Chiefs Company**
Lieutenant Tim Jewitt,
Firefighter Corey Snope,
Firefighter-Paramedic
Jason Russell, and
Captain Noel Fitzgerald



Outdoor Burning Permits Now Available Online

Residential fire permits are available online through May 31st for outdoor burning in designated areas of the fire district.

Visit www.eastpiercefirerescue.org for details to obtain a burn permit and view 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.



HEALTH WATCH, cont. from page 2

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. As mentioned above, East Pierce firefighters and paramedics are part of a county-wide emergency cardiac care system.

East Pierce crews obtain and interpret 12 Lead electrocardiograms (ECGs), provide early advanced care for chest pain and breathing issues, and, if necessary, defibrillate patients to "jumpstart" their heart if they collapse into cardiac arrest.

East Pierce firefighters and paramedics also provide "cardiac alerts" from the scene of a patient having a heart attack, giving the hospital time to mobilize cardiologists and other specialized staff so they can be ready to care for a heart attack patient when they arrive at the hospital. "Our goal," said McCallion, "is to cut every minute possible between the time a patient's heart attack symptoms begin and the time definitive treatment is provided, which often involves a catheterization to open a blocked cardiac artery, causing the heart attack."

With early cardiac alerts called in by the East Pierce paramedic crews, the cardiologists and their teams see patients much more quickly. "When every minute counts, it makes sense to call 9-1-1", said Chief Dyson. Additionally, Dyson notes that there is no "out-of-pocket cost" for East Pierce residents who call 9-1-1 and are transported to the hospital by East Pierce medic units. "It's what we are here for," he stated.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue was recognized by the American Heart Association's "EMS Mission Lifeline" awards and the International Association of Fire Chiefs as the "Heart-Safe Community of the Year" in the United States. These awards recognize our collaborative partnerships with local hospitals and the outstanding work of our firefighters and paramedics in caring for cardiac patients in our community.

Please remember—every second counts during a heart attack. When in doubt, check it out! Our crews are here to provide outstanding cardiac care for you and your loved ones. ■

connect with us!



Facebook: @eastpiercefirerescue
Twitter: @EastPierceFire
Web: www.eastpiercefirerescue.org
Headquarters: 253.863.1800
Email: info@eastpiercefirerescue.org

2022 Fire Commissioner Meetings

Board of Fire Commissioner 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.

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

