



FIRE HOUSE NEWS

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

SPRING 2024



FROM THE CHIEF JON PARKINSON

In April, East Pierce Fire & Rescue will ask voters to consider a request to restore the fire levy to its original rate of \$1.50 per \$1000 of assessed value. The fire levy is the primary funding source for your fire district. It is critical to maintain current service levels and ensure we can continue

Proposition 1: Fire Levy

to meet the community's needs in the future. EPFR remains the most cost-effective fire district in Pierce County by having the lowest tax rate of any fire department.

Proposition 1 is **not a new tax**. Restoring this vital levy will ensure EPFR can:

- Improve your emergency response capabilities by ensuring funding for two additional response units to be put in service in 2024 and staffing two additional fire stations in 2024 and 2025.
- Continue strengthening our commitment to the community by ensuring your service levels keep pace with your current and growing needs.
- Retain your dedicated firefighters, especially when a temporary federal

grant supporting 12 of them expires in 2026.

- Ensure stable funding to address the challenges of increasing expenses driven by inflation.

If rejected, your fire and emergency services face a projected revenue shortfall. This scenario could require us to either consider another attempt at voter approval for funding your fire levy increase or consider reductions in services and staffing.

A simple majority of yes votes is required to pass Proposition 1. ■

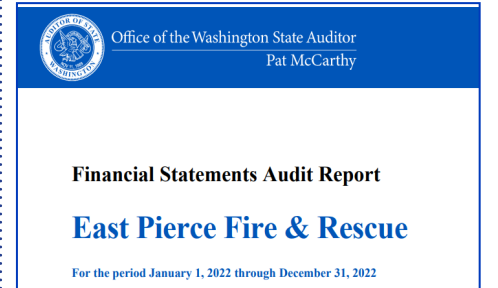


Learn more about Prop 1

EPFR Receives Clean Audit Status from State

East Pierce Fire & Rescue goes through a required and in-depth financial and accountability audit each year conducted by the WA State Auditor's Office.

We are pleased to report that EPFR met all the requirements outlined by the Board of Fire Commissioners and WA State RCWs, with no findings reported for the 2022 fiscal year.



See **AUDIT** page 2

Dedicated Service Returns to Milton Fire Station 124

After years of planning, preparation, and a strong commitment to improve local and regional services, East Pierce Fire & Rescue began 24/7/365 fire and EMS response out of the Milton Fire Station 124.

Adding dedicated service from the Milton Fire Station assists the greater North Hill area by strengthening the responder network, reducing response

times, and improving your safety.

As the region grows, East Pierce Fire & Rescue continues to look for ways to improve services while maintaining our commitment to spending tax dollars wisely and efficiently.

The increased service is only possible thanks to the ongoing support from our community. ■



Milton Station 124 is once again staffed with dedicated fire and EMS response 24/7/365.

Dog Rescued from Frozen Lake Tapps Adopted

In January, East Pierce crews were dispatched to a service call for a dog on the ice on Lake Tapps during the record-low freezing temps.

Callers to 911 reported seeing the dog fall through the ice twice. The dog pulled itself out but would not come to shore when called. At one point, the pooch was about 400 feet from shore. Firefighters wore dry suits and creatively used ropes and bodyboards to reach the dog.

The female dog, a Shar-Pei mix breed, was not micro-chipped and looked about a year old. Metro Animal Services took her to their shelter in Puyallup. Despite trending social media posts and news stories, no one came to claim her.

This story has a happy ending! We received an update from Metro Animal Services that our furry friend went to her forever home with her adoptive family at the end of February. ■



Firefighters rescue pooch from frozen lake.

Congrats Recruit Class 2023-A1

Congratulations to EPFR's newest probationary firefighters who received their shift and station assignments during a March 1st bell-ringing ceremony.

The eight recruits endured 22 weeks of grueling training before graduating from

the Pierce County Fire Training Consortium's Firefighter Recruit Class 2023-A1 on February 2nd. Now, they begin twelve focused months of probationary work.

Welcome to the East Pierce family!



Recruit Class 2023-A1 received their shift and station assignments during a March 1st Bell Ringing Ceremony.

connect with us!



@EastPierceFire

info@eastpiercefirer.org

www.eastpiercefirer.org

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HEALTH WATCH

Nutrition for Firefighters A Vital Component of Occupational Health

March is National Nutrition Month! For firefighters, maintaining good health is essential to ensure we are ready to perform and protect lives and property during demanding situations. Well-nourished firefighters experience increased energy and cognitive function, too.

Recognizing nutrition's critical role in your physical and mental well-being is important. We want to share good nutrition concepts and habits that East Pierce firefighters strive to make part of their daily routines.

- ♦ **Muscle Repair and Recovery:** Adequate protein intake is crucial for muscle repair and overall health. Include lean meats, poultry, fish, dairy, and plant-based protein sources in your meals. Muscle health precau-

tions are essential for firefighters as they engage in strenuous activities that lead to muscle damage.

- ♦ **Hydration:** Proper hydration is vital for maintaining body temperature, circulation, and cognitive function. Aim for regular water intake throughout the day. Hydration is a priority for firefighters working in extreme conditions that can lead to increased fluid loss through sweat.
- ♦ **Micro-nutrients:** Vitamins and minerals play essential roles in overall health. For example:
 - **Vitamin C and Zinc:** Support immune function and wound healing.
 - **Iron:** Vital for oxygen transport in the blood.

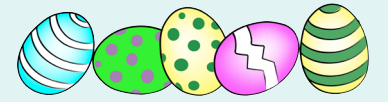
- **Calcium:** Important for bone health.
- ♦ **Antioxidants:** Colorful fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants that protect cells from oxidative damage. Include berries, spinach, kale, and bell peppers in your diet. Antioxidants are especially beneficial to firefighters exposed to smoke and other environmental toxins.
- ♦ **Carbohydrates:** These provide readily available energy. Opt for complex carbohydrates (whole grains, legumes, and vegetables) to sustain energy levels. Avoid excessive refined sugars, as they can lead to energy crashes.
- ♦ **Healthy Fats:** Omega-3 fatty acids in fish, nuts, and seeds support heart health and reduce inflammation. Incorporate sources like salmon, walnuts, and flaxseeds.
- ♦ **Meal Timing:** Irregular schedules can disrupt eating patterns. Plan and carry nutritious snacks to avoid relying on fast food during emergencies.
- ♦ **Stress Management:** High-stress situations can affect appetite and digestion. Practice stress-reducing techniques such as deep breathing, mindfulness, and adequate rest.
- ♦ **Mindful Eating:** Pay attention to hunger cues and eat slowly. Mindful eating helps prevent overindulgence.
- ♦ **Consult a Registered Dietitian:** They can create a customized nutrition plan based on your needs and goals.



Sumner's Station 113 crew prepares a healthier stir-fry meal. East Pierce firefighters typically come together for family-style dinners.

Remember, nourishing our bodies with wholesome foods is an investment in our long-term health. Happy, and healthy, eating! ■

Firefighters Host Easter Events



East Pierce firefighters are excited to once again sponsor three annual Easter Egg Hunts around the fire district on Saturday, March 30th. All three events are free. Firefighters will also accept food and monetary donations for the area food banks.

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.

SOUTH PRAIRIE

Join the East Pierce Firefighters for the 65th 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.

SUMNER

The 32nd 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 8-11-year-olds at 11 a.m.

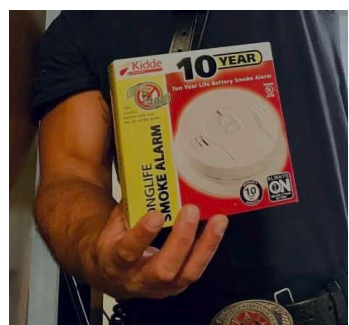


Hop on by our Easter Egg Hunts, Saturday, March 30th, sponsored by East Pierce firefighters.

Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With

Did you know that homes with working smoke alarms reduce the risk of fire fatalities by an astounding 50%?

East Pierce Fire & Rescue can provide our residents with free smoke alarms thanks to a partnership with the American Red Cross.



The smoke alarms, installed by EPFR firefighters, are equipped with long-life batteries which last approximately ten years.

"In the event of a fire, properly installed and maintained smoke alarms can save your life," says East Pierce Assistant Chief Matt Gilbert. "Smoke alarms provide early fire detection to allow your family time to escape safely." Install smoke alarms inside and outside all

sleeping areas and on every level of the home, including the basement. Since smoke and poisonous gases rise, installing smoke alarms on the ceiling is ideal and provides the earliest detection.

"A working smoke alarm continuously scans the air for smoke, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It never sleeps," says Gilbert. Hearing-impaired alarms (equipped with a lower-frequency tone and bed shaker component) are also available.

Test your smoke alarm once a month. Whether equipped with a standard or long-life battery or hardwired, all smoke alarms expire at ten years and should be replaced.

To schedule a smoke alarm installation, call 253-863-1800 and select option 4. ■

Smoke Alarms



AUDIT, cont. from page 1

To view the EPFR official audit reports, go to sao.wa.gov, scroll down to "Quick Search Audit Reports," and enter report numbers 1033935 (Financial) and 1034220 (Accountability). Then click "search." The audit reports should appear. ■

State Auditor



2023 Total Emergency Calls

Your EPFR firefighters responded to **12,563** calls last year. For more statistics, please view the 2023 Annual Report at eastpiercefirer.org.

CALL TYPE	Emergency Medical Calls	9,166
	*Good Intent	1,174
	Public Assist	991
	False Alarm.....	657
	Fire	355
	Hazardous Materials.....	209
	Other.....	11
	Total Emergency Calls	12,563

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

C-a-l-l-i-n-g All Scouts!

East Pierce Fire & Rescue invites all scouting groups up to fifth grade to attend the 8th Annual Scout Night from 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 25th, at the Headquarters Station in Bonney Lake, 18421 Veterans Memorial Drive East.

The free event is geared toward groups within the fire district's service area, including Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, Milton, Edgewood, South Prairie, Tehaleh, and unincorporated Buckley.

Scouts rotate through various learning stations, including:

- **Home Safety:** Identify various home hazards, learn the importance of smoke alarms, and when to call 911.
- **Basic First Aid:** Learn first aid basics like cooling a burn and treating cuts, nose bleeds, and bee stings.
- **Home Escape Planning:** Design a home escape plan identifying two ways out of every room, designate a meeting place, and learn to crawl low under smoke.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Learn why it's essential to have an emergency plan, how to assemble an emergency kit, and the importance of an out-of-area contact.
- **Firefighter and Law Enforcement Tools, Equipment, and Careers:** Get an up-close look at the equipment firefighters and police officers use to stay safe and do their jobs and ask why they chose their careers.
- **Ropes and Knots:** Watch firefighters demonstrate various knot tying, then practice the skill.



Scouts learn to tie a bowline knot at Scout Night, one of several engaging learning stations.

Scout Night

Advance registration is required. Visit eastpiercefirer.org for more event details and to register. ■



FIRE COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

Board of Fire Commissioner meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are in person with an option to attend virtually. Agendas and links to the meetings are posted at www.eastpiercefirer.org.

2024 Meeting Schedule

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

BOND UPDATE: Making Progress

In November 2018, voters approved a bond to replace all six frontline fire engines and a ladder truck, replace four fire stations, and build a new fire station in Tehaleh.

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

Fire Station Construction Status

- ▶ **Station 118 - Edgewood:** Opened in fall of 2023.
- ▶ **Station 111 - Bonney Lake:** Under construction. Opens in summer of 2024.
- ▶ **Station 114 - Lake Tapps:** Under construction. Opens in summer of 2024.
- ▶ **Station 117 - Tehaleh:** Under construction. Opens early 2025.
- ▶ **Station 112 - Prairie Ridge:** In

permitting. Construction to begin in summer of 2024.

Vehicle Status

- ▶ Ladder 113 and Engines 111, 112, 114, 116, 118, and 1119 are received and serving our communities.

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



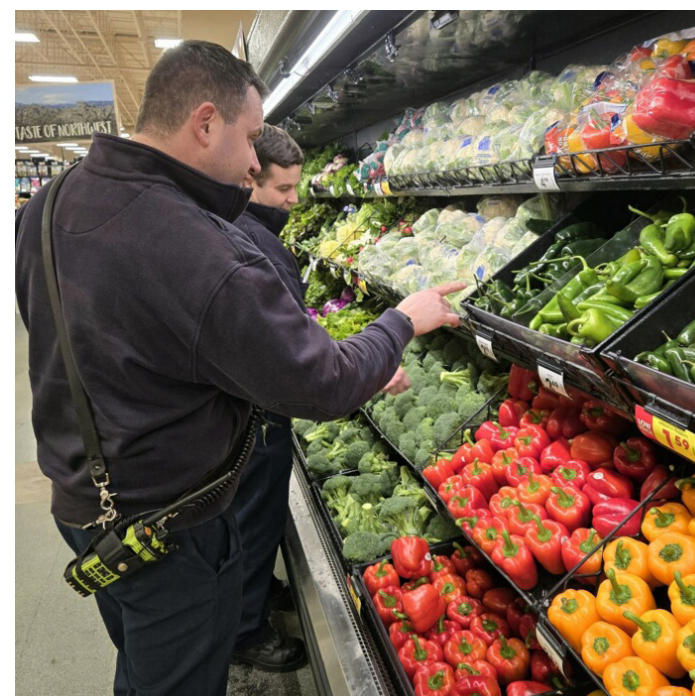
Foundation work takes shape on the new Tehaleh Station 117, slated to open in early 2025.

Firefighters Spotted Grocery Shopping

Have you ever noticed firefighters grocery shopping while on duty? Don't be surprised – it's all part of their service readiness.

Firefighters work long, 24-hour shifts and often prepare and cook meals together as a crew. And because they must be ready to respond immediately, they keep their toolbox nearby – the fire truck or ambulance. A firefighter's toolkit isn't just hoses and helmets; it includes numerous essential tools and EMS equipment designed to serve you. So, seeing them in the grocery store means they're nearby and ready to spring into action whenever duty calls.

Here's an interesting tidbit: despite what some might think, taxpayers don't foot the bill for their meals. Your firefighters cover the cost themselves. So, next time you spot firefighters in the store, we encourage you to say hello. We are proud to serve you! ■



East Pierce Firefighters shopping for ingredients for dinner are ready to respond to an emergency when dispatched.

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.

Visit eastpiercefirer.org to view outdoor burning regulations and alternatives.



Outdoor Burning



Protect Your Noggin

The days are getting longer, and the weather is improving, so we can enjoy the outdoors! Be sure to gear up with the proper safety equipment if venturing out on bicycles, skateboards, and scooters.

East Pierce Professional Firefighters offers bike and multi-sport helmets for purchase at our Headquarters Station during business hours, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Cash and credit/debit cards are accepted.



Multi-Sport Helmets
\$11 each
Sizes small - large



Bike Helmets
\$8 each
Sizes toddler - XL

WHO IS EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE?

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

EPFR was formed 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 to provide a seamless response to emergencies.

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 approximately 100,000+ 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 eight stations - seven staffed 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 medical emergencies and fires.

An independently-elected Board of Commissioners governs 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 115 - Lake Tapps**
1605 210th Ave. E.
- Station 116 - Foothills**
10515 234th Ave. E.
- Station 118 - Edgewood**
10515 234th Ave. E.
- Station 124 - Milton**
1000 Laurel St.

Training Up Safe Sitters

For years, adolescent babysitters have been “stepping in” for parents who are “stepping out.” While many of these young people bring a desire to care for children, few are prepared for the magnitude of responsibilities they assume. EPFR teaches the Safe Sitter curriculum to help equip students with life-long

skills and create future generations of safety-conscious adults and parents.

Safe Sitter is a medically-accurate program that teaches boys and girls in grades 6-8 how to handle emergencies when caring for children.

The three-day class includes safe and nurturing childcare techniques, behavior management skills, and appropriate responses to medical emergencies, emphasizing child and infant CPR and choke saving. In addition to fire and injury prevention, it also teaches business skills for running a babysitting business.

EPFR offers two class options to choose from,



Safe Sitter students learn business and life-saving CPR skills during class.

2024 SAFE SITTER CLASSES

July 9, 10, and 11

8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Location: Station 118

10105 24th St E,

Edgewood

-OR-

July 16, 17, and 18

8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Location: Station 116

10515 234th Ave E,

Buckley



both scheduled in July. The cost is \$45 per student.

For more information and to register, visit www.eastpiercefirerescue.org. Classes fill quickly, so register early. ■



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 200 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 Captain 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, access the **East Pierce Professional Firefighters Operation Warm page** through this QR code.

Operation Warm



East Pierce Classes & Public Education

- FREE PROGRAMS - To residents of East Pierce Fire & Rescue

LIFE JACKET LOANER PROGRAM

Wearer must be present for fitting. Available at the Headquarters Station.

CHILD SAFETY SEAT INSPECTIONS

District residents can schedule a free appointment. Certified child passenger safety technicians check to ensure your child is in the right seat, the seat is installed correctly, and your child is placed in the seat correctly.

STATION TOURS Call to arrange a tour of any of our fire stations.

SMOKE ALARM INSTALLATIONS Includes smoke alarm equipped with 10-year battery (subject to availability).

BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS Stop by any staffed station (subject to staff availability).

FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING Learn how to use a fire extinguisher with our interactive, digital training prop either at your location or ours for groups of 10 or more.

HANDS-ONLY CPR CLASS One-hour, non-certification class for adult, hands-only CPR. Groups of 10 or more can schedule this training at their location or at our Headquarters Station.

- SERVICES OFFERED -

CPR 9:00 a.m.—12:30 p.m. | BASIC FIRST AID 1:30—4:30 p.m.

Apr 13 or 19 | May 18 or 22 | Jun 15 or 19 | Aug 14 or 24

The cost for citizens residing within EPFR's jurisdiction (including Sumner, Bonney Lake, Lake Tapps, South Prairie, Tehaleh, Milton, and Edgewood) is \$25 for either a CPR or First Aid class, or \$50 for both. The cost for non-residents is \$40 for each class, or \$80 for both. All classes are held at our Headquarters Station.

To register, call 253-863-1800 during regular business hours or register on-line at www.eastpiercefirerescue.org.

HELMET SALES AND FITTING* Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Bike helmets \$8 each. Multi-Sport helmets \$11 each. Headquarters Station.

LIFE JACKET SALES AND FITTING* Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Life jackets \$17 each. Headquarters Station.

SAFE SITTER CLASSES

Jul 9, 10, and 11 | Jul 16, 17, and 18

Cost: \$45. To view class details and register on-line, visit www.eastpiercefirerescue.org.

* Sponsored by East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520