



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

WINTER 2025



appy (belated) New Year! Just Llike that, 2024 is gone, and 2025 is off and rolling. I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments of East Pierce Fire & Rescue over the last in 2024, the East Pierce community year; below is just a tiny snapshot of

Financial Audit: We completed the audit of our financial records with the Washington State Auditor's Office.

FROM THE CHIEF **PARKINSON**

Once again, the East Pierce finance team led us to receive clean audit status, which means all our finances were in perfect order, and we complied with all state and federal rules.

Fire Levy Renewed: In April of 2024, voters approved a lid lift of the fire levy, which was last approved in 2017. This important levy makes up the bulk of the revenue for East Pierce Fire & Rescue and is critical to our ability to provide emergency services.

Additional Medic Unit: Thanks to voters supporting the fire levy renewal now has an additional medic unit prounit provides emergency transport to regional hospitals.

Milton Fire Station: The fire levy

renewal also provided for the staffing of Station 124 in Milton 24/7/365.

Fire Station Construction: Several fire station projects made significant progress in 2024. For more information, see the Bond Update section in this newsletter.

In 2025, 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, Instagram, and X (formerly known as Twitter) and the district website at www.eastpiercefire.org.

to thank you all for entrusting us with protecting the community. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated!

Hop On Over To **Firefighter Hosted Easter Events**



East Pierce firefighters are excited to once again sponsor three annual Easter Egg Hunts around the fire district on Saturday, April 19th. 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 66th 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 33rd Annual Sumner Easter by 4-7-year-olds at 10 a.m., then 8-



their annual Easter Egg Hunts, Saturday, April

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

11-year-olds at 11 a.m.



East Pierce firefighters are EGG-static to host

On behalf of the district, I would like what we've been working on: viding service 24 hours a day. A medic

New Crisis Intervention Coordinator Role

t East Pierce Fire & Rescue, we ✓ ****recognize the vital role mental health and crisis support play in the well-being of our first responders and community. To strengthen these efforts, we are excited to introduce



fighter and current Chaplain Lance Schinkal steps into new Crisis Intervention Coordinator role

a new Crisis Intervention Coordinator position.

This role will be instrumental in evaluating and enhancing our current chaplain program, ensuring we have the right resources and personnel to

support our teams. Responsibilities will include recruiting, onboarding, and scheduling chaplains as needed and fostering strong relationships with our internal members and first responders.

Collaboration is key, and the Crisis Intervention Coordinator will work closely with Operations and EMS to identify ways to support and engage with our personnel. Additionally, they will connect with local mental health and community resources to ensure that EPFR has a well-rounded support

Beyond program coordination, this role may also involve delivering training sessions focused on mental health, stress management, and resilience-building strategies. By identifying gaps in EPFR's current intervention practices, the coordinator will help us enhance our ability to care for those who serve our community.

Retired EPFR firefighter and current volunteer Chaplain Lance Schinkal stepped into the new part-time Crisis Intervention Coordinator position on February 1st. Schinkal brings over 40 years of experience in fire and EMS services through public and private entities.

We look forward to this position's positive impact on EPFR and the individuals who dedicate their lives to keeping others safe. Stay tuned for more updates as we build a stronger, more supportive environment for our team.

word-protected with bank-level encryp-

tion and security. If you're comfortable

be comfortable logging in to Communi-

logging in to your on-line bank, you'll

Community Connect: Help Us Help You

Ye are always looking for ways to better serve our East Pierce ommunities. For this reason, we are rolling out a new program to protect our residents and their property more effectively.

Introducing Community Connect - a secure, easy-to-use platform that allows you to share critical information about your household that will aid first responders when responding to your residence. Providing information about your household that you feel is important for us to know will help ensure you

and everyone you care about is better

protected.

Permit No. 71

Kent, WA

DIA9 U.S. POSTAGE

Prsrt Std

Creating an East Pierce Fire & Rescue profile with Community Connect is free and as simple as one-two-three.

vide to Community Connect is 100% secure and used only to serve you during emergencies. Your information is never used for any other purpose. All

1. Create an East Pierce Fire & Rescue profile with Community Connect. Sign in to get started. It just takes an email, phone number, and address within the EPFR service area.

2. Enter the information that matters most - include valuable details that save lives in an emergency.

3. Visit your Community Connect profile often to ensure your information is current. That's it!

East Pierce Fire Community Connect Create an Account for Your Household

ty Connect.

The data you pro-

logins are pass-

Community Connect For more information By the time this newsletter arrives in and to create a Comyour mailbox, we'll be settling into the munity Connect profile, new Headquarters Station at 8601 visit eastpiercefire.org. ■ Main St E in Bonney Lake. We'll share details about a grand opening on our social media pages soon!



Postal Customer

ECRWSS

HEALTH **Answering Your Questions** About Ambulance Fees



Why did we receive a bill for ambulance service? I thought East Pierce Fire and Rescue residents received free ambulance service from the fire district.

East Pierce ambulance • service is not actually free. However, if you are an East Pierce resident transported by an East Pierce medic unit (ambulance), you should have no "outof-pocket" expenses. We bill your insurance company, Medicare, or Medicaid for the cost of the ambulance ride. Any additional costs, such as co-pays you usually need to pay, will be "written off" against the funds received through our EMS Levy. Some residents will receive a copy of the ambulance billing statement, indicating the service's cost and stating that this is NOT a bill that requires payment. Instead, this statement is provided to you along with a request that you provide additional information so we can bill your health insurance provider(s).

• What happens to people • without insurance or those living outside the fire district?

A If you're a district resident and don't have health insurance, your entire bill is covered by the EMS levy. Non-residents in the district, when transported by the medic unit to the hospital,

are responsible for co-pays or any response and ambulance transportion of the ambulance bill not covered by their insurance.

Does East Pierce Fire and Rescue attempt to bill our insurance companies?

Yes. EPFR will bill your insurance company and Medicare and Medicaid providers to recover payments for ambulance transport. To be included in the "no out-of-pocket" cost EMS transport program, residents must complete and return any required paperwork sent to them by our billing service, Systems Design, or their own insurance provider. Correct, updated information is crucial for our ability to bill insurance providers successfully.

If district residents don't comply with requests for information, they could be liable for the entire ambulance transport fee and even turned over to a collection agen-

What happens to the reve-• nues collected from medic unit patient transport fees?

More than \$2.8 million in ambulance transport fees are collected yearly from health insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid. These funds help cover a portion of the cost of providing the community EMS

port services.

What happens if East
Pierce has no medic units available for a 9-1-1 medical call? Who comes, and do I have to pay the other ambulance provider?

East Pierce has five medic units available 24/7. Our medic units handle more than 98% of the EMS ambulance transports. Last year, we transported more than 6,000 patients to area hospitals.

However, when our medic units are busy on other 9-1-1 medical or fire calls, we must request "mutual aid" from neighboring fire departments and private ambulances. They send units to back us up if we don't have any available medic units.

We have reciprocal "mutual aid" transport agreements with most neighboring fire districts. If one of their medic units responds to our fire district and takes you to the emergency department, you receive the same "no out-of-pocket cost" ambulance service as if an East Pierce medic unit took you to the hospital. We reciprocate when we respond to their districts when they need mutual

What happens if a privateambulance takes me to the

hospital?

A Besides our "mutual aid" responses from other fire departments, private ambulances occasionally transport district residents to the hospital. In this case, patients will receive a separate bill from the private ambulance company and are responsible for any portion not covered by insurance. There is no mechanism to use the EMS Levy fund to cover any of those costs. Additionally, urgent care clinics and assisted living centers frequently use private ambulances to transport patients to hospitals for follow-up medical care. In this case, payment for these calls, which are not part of the 911 system, would be the patient's responsibility.

Does this agreement apply if I'm a district resident but get hurt in some area outside the district, such as Puyallup or Spanaway?

The reciprocal "no out-of-pocket expense" mutual aid agreement only extends to 9-1-1 calls inside our district. If you become ill or injured in a neighboring fire district, even if we have a mutual aid transport agreement, you will be responsible for the ambulance bill if they transport you to a hospital. There is no EMS levy "writeoff" provision when you are outside the district and become ill or injured.

Re-Branding the Fire Prevention | Clean Audit From State **Division**

Te are excited to announce a V change within East Pierce Fire & Rescue that reflects our evolving priorities and commitment to our community and personnel. Effective January 1, 2025, the Prevention Division will now be known as the Health and Safety Division. This new name better represents the expanded scope of our mission while honoring the critical work we have always done to prevent fires and protect lives.

Why the Change?

The decision to transition to the Health and Safety Division reflects our ongoing commitment to a just culture approach to safety. While fire prevention and Community Risk Reduction remain at the core of our duties, this new name encompasses a broader focus that includes:

- Fire Prevention/Community Risk Reduction: Continuing our dedication to public education, inspections, and code enforcement to reduce the risk of fires and enhance community
- Health Initiatives: Promoting our firefighters' and staff's wellness and resilience, ensuring they are physically and mentally prepared to serve the

community.

Safety Practices: Enhancing our training programs and safety protocols to minimize risks on and off the job.

What Stays the Same?

The duties and responsibilities of the former Prevention Division remain integral to our operations. We will continue to provide fire safety education, conduct inspections, and enforce fire codes. These efforts are now part of a more comprehensive strategy that prioritizes the health and safety of everyone in our community—from our residents to our first responders.

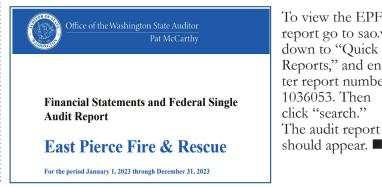
Looking Ahead

As the Health and Safety Division, we are dedicated to building on our legacy of prevention while embracing new opportunities to protect and serve. This change will enable us to respond more effectively to our district's needs and ensure a safer, healthier future for all.

Thank you for your continued support as we embark on this exciting new chapter. Together, we can make our community a safer and healthier place to live, work, and thrive.! ■

East Pierce Fire & Rescue goes through a required and in-depth financial 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 2023 fiscal year.



To view the EPFR official audit report go to sao.wa.gov, scroll down to "Quick Search Audit Reports," and en-State Auditor ter report number 1036053. Then click "search."



2024 Total Emergency Calls

Your EPFR firefighters responded to 13,044 emergency calls last year. For more statistics, please view the 2024 Annual Report at www.eastpiercefire.org.



Emergency Medical Calls9,443 *Good Intent1,291 Public Assist997 False Alarm......699 Fire306 Hazardous Materials298 Other......10 Total Emergency Calls...... 13,044

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

Annual Scout Night

ast Pierce Fire & Rescue invites all scouting groups up to fifth grade to attend the 9th Annual Scout Night from 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 24th, at the NEW Headquarters Station in Bonney Lake (8601 Main Street 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-ofarea 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.
- Poison Prevention: Learn about poison prevention, including what poison is and how to be safe by keeping hazardous things put away or locked up.

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



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

FIRE COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

The Board of Fire Commissioners meets on the third Tuesday

of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are in-person with an op-

www.eastpiercefire.org.

2025 Meeting Schedule

March 18

April 15 May 20

June 17

July 15

to attend virtually. Agendas meeting links are posted at

August 19

September 16

October 21

November 18

December 16

Wet-Road Wisdom: Staying Safe **Behind the Wheel**

Driving in the rain can be as challenging as navigating snowy or icy roads, especially where wet conditions catch you off guard. To keep you safe on the wet roads, East Pierce Fire & Rescue offers five essential tips for safer wet-road driving.

1. Prepare Your Vehicle

- Rain-Readiness Check: Ensure your vehicle is ready for the rain. Check tire tread and pressure for optimal traction, and make sure your windshield wipers are in prime condition.
- Emergency Kit Essentials: Pack an emergency kit with blankets, water, and a flashlight—just in

2. Drive Smoothly and Slowly

- Avoid Slippery Situations: Wet roads can be treacherous. To prevent skidding, avoid rapid acceleration, sudden braking, and sharp turns.
- Take It Easy: Drive at a reduced

speed to give yourself more time to react to any surprises on the

3. Increase Following Distance

- Brake Time: It takes longer to stop on wet roads. Increase your following distance to ensure you have plenty of room to stop safely.
- Safety Rule: Double or even triple your usual following distance, depending on the wet conditions.

4. Stay Visible and Alert

- Light Up: Use your low-beam headlights in heavy rain to improve visibility and help other drivers see you.
- Clear Vision: Keep your windows free of rain and fog and ensure all your lights function properly.

5. Ditch the Cruise Control and **Be Cautious**



- Manual Control: Avoid using cruise control in the rain, as it can make it difficult to react quickly to changing road conditions.
- Bridge and Curve Alert: Be extra cautious on bridges and curves where water accumulates, increasing the risk of hydroplaning.

Following these tips can help ensure a safer journey for yourself and others on the road. East Pierce Fire & Rescue is dedicated to your safety and encourages you to stay informed and prepared.

Follow us on social media for more safety tips and updates. Stay safe out there!

BOND UPDATE: Stations Nearing Completion

In November 2018, voters approved a bond $oldsymbol{1}$ to replace all six front-line 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 February of 2025.
- ► Station 114 Lake Tapps: Under construction. Expected to open in March of 2025.
- ► Station 117 Tehaleh: Under construction. Expected to open in April
- ► Station 112 Prairie Ridge: In permitting. Construction begins in February of 2025.

Vehicle Status

► Ladder 113 and Engines 111, 112, 114, 116, 118, and 1119 are received and serving our

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

Station 111 / Headquarters—Bonney Lake. The architecture and design similarities

across our new fire stations contribute to efficiencies and cost savings

Station 117—Tehaleh

Protect Your Noggin

East Pierce Professional Firefighters offers bike and multi-sport helmets for purchase at our Headquarters Station in Bonney Lake and Station 118 in Edgewood. Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Credit/debit cards are accepted.



Multi-Sport Helmets \$13 each Sizes small - large



Bike Helmets \$11 each Sizes toddler - XL



"Where Compassion and Action Meet"

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 crosstrained 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
Justin Evans
Kevin Garling
Randy Kroum
Pat McElligott
Cynthia Wernet

STAFFED STATIONS

Station 111 - Bonney Lake
Headquarters Station
8601 Main St. 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 117 - Tehaleh 14504 181st Ave. E.

Station 118 - Edgewood 10105 24th St. E.

Station 124 - Milton 1000 Laurel St.

Safe Sitter Babysitter Classes

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.



Safe sitter students learn important childcare nurturing techniques and life-saving skills.

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, both scheduled in July.

2025 SAFE SITTER CLASSES

July 7, 8, and 9

8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Location: Headquarters /Station 111 8601 Main St,

Bonney Lake, WA -OR-



July 21, 22, and 23 8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. Location: Station 118 10105 24th St E,

The cost is \$45 per student.

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



Edgewood, WA

Welcome to EPFR's Newest Support Members!

MECHANIC - Mika Wright

East Pierce welcomed Mika Wright as our newest mechanic in October 2024.

Having worked as a mechanic for the Bethel and Highline school districts for the past 16 years, Wright brings much experience to EPFR. Wright obtained an Associate of Arts in Diesel and Heavy Equipment from Bates Technical College and is also a certified welder.

Originally from Nanakuli on

EastPierceFire

the Island of Oahu in Hawaii, Wright relocated to the Pacific Northwest in 2005. Married to his wife, Erika, for 15 years, they have two children together.

You know he loves his job because his passion outside of work is tinkering with old-school Volkswagens and diesel trucks. Welcome aboard, Mikal

connect with us!

(253) 863-1800

info@eastpiercefire.org

www.eastpiercefire.org

Taylor Mack joined EPFR in December 20 Administrator. Mack obtained his Computer gree from Oregon State University and bridge

Taylor Mack joined EPFR in December 2024 as our IT Administrator. Mack obtained his Computer Science Degree from Oregon State University and brings eight years of information technology experience to East Pierce, having most recently worked as a Deskside Support Engineer at Russell Investments, the largest financial investment firm on the West Coast.

Mack and his wife Sarah have been married for two years. Outside of work, Mack enjoys snowboarding, mountain biking, cooking, and woodworking.



Mack knows his way around a fire station. His father, Bill Mack, retired from the fire service after 31 years, with his last two years as a Deputy Chief with EPFR. Welcome to the family, Taylor!

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.

Check out www.eastpiercefire.org for outdoor burning regulations and alternatives.



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

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

- SERVICES OFFERED -

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

Mar 15 or 25 | Apr 5 or 16 | May 3 or 14 | Jun 7 or 25

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

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

HELMET SALES AND FITTING* Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Bike helmets \$11 each. Multi-Sport helmets \$13 each. Station 111/ Headquarters and Station 118.

LIFE JACKET SALES AND FITTING* Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Life jackets \$17 each. Station 111/Headquarters and Station 118

SAFE SITTER CLASSES

Headquarters Station.

Jul 7, 8, and 9 | Jul 21, 22, and 23

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

* Sponsored by East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520