



# FIRE HOUSE NEWS

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

SPRING 2026



## FROM THE CHIEF **JON PARKINSON**

and distributed to help ensure children across our service area had something special this season.

Our firefighters with IAFF Local 3520 also led several long-standing community traditions:

- The Sumner Fire Station Pancake Feed welcomed a large crowd and raised funds for local food banks.
- Coats for Kids helped provide warm jackets for elementary school students during the colder months.
- Santa Runs throughout December brought holiday spirit to neighborhoods while collecting food and toys for families in need.

These events reflect the strong connection between our firefighters and the communities we serve.

### December Flood Response:

December also brought one of the most significant flood events our region has experienced in recent years. Communities from Sumner through the Orting Valley and into South Prairie were

heavily impacted. Flooding closed roadways, damaged homes, and prompted evacuations in several areas.

We are grateful that no serious injuries occurred within district boundaries. I want to personally thank our regional partners who worked alongside us throughout this event, including Pierce County Emergency Management, Pierce County Sheriff's Department, Central Pierce Fire & Rescue, and the cities of Sumner, Bonney Lake, Edgewood, Milton, and South Prairie. Large-scale incidents like this require coordination, professionalism, and commitment across agencies. We are thankful for those partnerships.

We invite you to stay connected with us on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), and at [www.eastpiercefirer.org](http://www.eastpiercefirer.org), where you can find the latest news and updates from across the district.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. Serving this community is a privilege, and one our entire team remains committed to, every single day. ■

Welcoming in 2026! The holidays are behind us, and 2026 is already well underway. Over the past few months, your fire district has remained active across our communities. Here is a snapshot of what we've been working on.

### Holiday Community Events:

East Pierce Fire & Rescue was proud to participate in several holiday events throughout the district, including local tree lighting celebrations and community gatherings.

Through the Community Toybox, in partnership with the Gordon Family YMCA, the Sumner-Bonney Lake School District, and the Sumner Police Department, toys were collected

## EPFR Receives Clean Financial Audit Status

East Pierce Fire & Rescue goes through a required and in-depth Financial and Accountability Audit each year conducted by WA State Auditor's Office.

The Financial Audit covered fiscal year 2024. We are pleased to report that EPFR met all the requirements outlined by the Board of Fire Commissioners and WA State RCW's, with no findings reported.

The Accountability Audit covers fiscal years 2023 and 2024 and is currently in progress.

To view the EPFR official financial audit report, go to [sao.wa.gov](http://sao.wa.gov), scroll down to "Quick Search Audit Reports," and enter report number 1038755. Then click "search." The audit report should appear. ■

## Community Toybox: A Successful First Year

In 2025, the Sumner-Bonney Lake Community Toybox launched its inaugural holiday drive through a partnership between East Pierce Fire & Rescue, the Gordon Family YMCA, the Sumner-Bonney Lake School District, and the Sumner Police Department.

The goal was simple: support local families and help ensure children across our service area experienced the joy of the holiday season.

The response from the community was remarkable.

- 555+ children from 238 families received toys
- 90 volunteers staffed 114 shifts
- 30+ collection boxes were placed throughout the community
- 240+ toys were purchased from the Amazon wish list
- 25 bikes were distributed to local kids

Local businesses, volunteers, and community members stepped up in a big way, donating toys, staffing shifts, and supporting distribution efforts.

A special thank you to East Pierce Firefighters Local 3520 for their generous \$500 donation to support the Community Toybox efforts.

To every volunteer, donor, and family who was part of this, thank you. You made the holiday season brighter for hundreds of local kids, and that impact will be felt long after the decorations come down. We can't wait to see what this community does next year. ■



### HOP INTO SPRING WITH EAST PIERCE

East Pierce Firefighters will host four free Easter Egg Hunts this spring. Sponsored by Local 3520, food bank donations and voluntary contributions are welcome at all events.

**Edgewood – Saturday, April 4, 2026**  
The annual Edgewood Easter Egg Hunt will be held at 10 a.m. at Edgemont Park (24th Street East and 110th Avenue East, adjacent to Edgemont Junior High).

**South Prairie – Saturday, April 4, 2026**  
The 67th Annual South Prairie Easter Egg Hunt will be held at 10 a.m. at South Prairie City Park (Third and Tacoma Streets).

**Sumner – Saturday, April 4, 2026**  
The 34th Annual Sumner Easter Egg Hunt will be held at 9 a.m. at Sunset Stadium, followed by prize and raffle giveaways.

All age groups start simultaneously, divided by age:

- Left side: 1-3 years
- Center field: 4-7 years
- Right side: 8-11 years

**Tehaleh – Saturday, March 28, 2026**  
The 2nd Annual Tehaleh Easter Egg Hunt will be held at Discovery Park (17834 Cascadia Boulevard East) and is co-hosted with the Tehaleh HOA. Age-grouped hunts will take place throughout the morning, including a Sensory-Friendly Hunt.

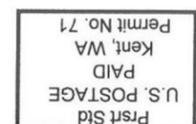
Event times and details are subject to change. Please visit [eastpiercefirer.org](http://eastpiercefirer.org) for the latest schedule and parking information.

### SUMNER-BONNEY LAKE COMMUNITY TOYBOX

2025 Holiday Drive Results

CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED TOYS <b>555+</b> from 238 families	VOLUNTEERS <b>90</b> people staffing 114 shifts
COLLECTION BOXES PLACED <b>30+</b> throughout the community	TOYS FROM AMAZON GIFT LIST <b>240+</b> purchased by generous donors
BIKES DISTRIBUTED <b>25</b> given to local kids	

Thank you to every volunteer, donor, and community partner ♥



Postal Customer  
ECRWSS

"Where Compassion and Action Meet"

## HEALTH WATCH

# Supporting Communication During Emergencies

April is recognized as World Autism Month, a time focused on increasing understanding of autism. At East Pierce Fire & Rescue, this observance reflects our ongoing commitment to strengthening how we prepare for and respond to emergencies throughout our community.

Emergency response environments are often fast-paced and complex. For individuals who are autistic, these situations can present additional communication or sensory challenges. Being aware of those possibilities allows responders to approach each situation with flexibility and professionalism.

### Building Awareness and Tools

Firefighter Hannah Shotland led the development of Autism Support Kits that are now carried on every EPFR medic unit. The kits are part of a broader initiative to strengthen communication strategies and support patient-centered care during emergency responses.

“First responders are trained to act quickly and decisively,” Shotland says. “At the same time, there are moments when adjusting our approach can support clearer communication.”

The intent of the program is not to alter the urgency of medical care, but to enhance awareness of how different individuals may process information and respond to high-stress situations. Thoughtful communication strategies can improve understanding

for both patients and responders.

### District Training

Prior to placing the kits in service, department personnel participated in dedicated training developed in coordination with EMS leadership. The session focused on communication awareness, sensory considerations that may arise during calls, and practical response strategies that promote patience, adaptability, and advocacy throughout the care process.

This training reflects EPFR’s continued focus on readiness and effective emergency care.

### Serving the Whole Community

While designed with autism in mind, the communication principles supported by this initiative can benefit many individuals, including those who may be non-speaking, experiencing cognitive changes, or navigating language differences.

“If there are specific communication preferences or calming strategies that are helpful for your loved one, sharing that information with responders can support effective care,” Shotland says.

During World Autism Month and throughout the year, EPFR remains committed to providing informed, compassionate service to every member of our community. ■

## What’s Inside the Autism Support Kit?

Tools designed to support communication and comfort during emergency responses.

### Fidget Tools

- Support self-soothing and focus

### Noise-Reducing Headphones

- Help minimize overwhelming sounds

### Sunglasses

- Reduce light sensitivity

### Weighted Blanket

- Provide calming pressure and comfort

### Communication Card

- Offer visual options for expressing needs

### Dry-Erase Board

- Allow writing or drawing to communicate



## Safe Sitter Classes Return This July

Is your middle schooler ready to stay home alone, watch younger siblings, or begin babysitting?

East Pierce Fire & Rescue’s Safe Sitter program prepares students in grades 6–8 with the confidence and practical skills they need to handle real-life situations safely and responsibly.

This medically accurate, hands-on class includes interactive activities, role play, and CPR manikin practice.

### Students Learn:

- **Safety Skills** – How to prevent unsafe situations and respond to severe weather, power outages, and other emergencies.
- **First Aid & Rescue Skills** – CPR, choking rescue,

and how to assess injuries and illness.

- **Child Care Skills** – Child development basics, behavior management, and hands-on care practice.
- **Life & Business Skills** – Screening jobs, discussing fees, and presenting themselves professionally.

### 2026 Class Dates:

- July 6, July 7, July 27 & July 28

All classes run 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Station 111 in Bonney Lake.

Cost: \$45 per student

Space is limited and classes fill quickly.

Register online at [eastpiercefirer.org](http://eastpiercefirer.org) or call 253-863-1800. ■

## Bicycle Safety: Rules of the Road

Riding a bike is a great way to stay active and explore our community. Following a few simple rules can help keep you safe on every ride.

- **Wear a helmet.** It's your most important piece of safety equipment and can protect you in a fall or collision.
- **Ride with traffic.** Travel in the same direction as vehicles and stay as far right as safely possible. This makes you more predictable and easier for drivers to see.
- **Obey traffic laws.** Stop at stop signs and red lights, yield when required, and follow posted signs and signals.
- **Use hand signals.** Let drivers and other cyclists know when you are turning or stopping. Clear signals help prevent surprises.
- **Look before entering a street.** Look left, right, and left again before crossing, and check behind you before turning.
- **Be visible.** Avoid low-light riding when possible. If unavoidable, wear reflective clothing and use front and rear lights.
- **Check your bike before you ride.** Make sure your brakes, tires, gears, and reflectors are all in good shape.

Ride smart. Ride safe. ■

### Did You Know?

**Bike Helmets Reduce Head Injury Risk by Up to 85%!**

**Protect Your Noggin!**

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

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

**Bike Helmets**  
\$11 each  
Sizes toddler - XL.

## Bond Updates: Spring 2026

In November 2018, voters approved a bond 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 Fall 2023.
- Station 111 - Bonney Lake: Opened February 2025.
- Station 114 - Lake Tapps: Opened June 2025.
- Station 117 - Tehaleh: Opened June 2025.
- Station 112 - Prairie Ridge: Under construction. Scheduled to open Fall 2026.

### 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. ■

**Our Digital Newsletter is Launching This Year**

Scan to Subscribe



# Wildfire Safety Starts at Home

Your yard can do more than look great — it can help protect your home. At Station 117 in Tehaleh, East Pierce Fire & Rescue created a Firewise Demonstration Garden to show neighbors how thoughtful landscaping can slow fire spread and give your home a fighting chance.

The garden is organized into four zones. Each one plays a role in slowing fire and reducing heat near buildings.

### Zone 1: Immediate Zone (0–5 feet from the home)

This area is your first line of defense.

- Use noncombustible materials like rock, gravel, or pavers.
- Avoid bark or wood mulch directly against the home.
- Keep plants low-growing and well maintained.
- Remove dead vegetation and debris.

### Zone 2: Intermediate Zone (5–30 feet)

This zone helps reduce fire intensity before it reaches the structure.

- Space shrubs and small trees apart.
- Trim branches and remove dead material.

- Break up continuous fuels with walkways or hardscaping.
- Keep grass mowed and landscaping maintained.

### Zone 3: Extended Zone (30–100 feet)

This area focuses on reducing fuel buildup.

- Remove ladder fuels that allow fire to climb into tree canopies.
- Thin trees to reduce crowding.
- Clear fallen branches and woody debris.
- Maintain separation between vegetation.

### Zone 4: Perimeter Zone

This outer area transitions to natural vegetation.

- Reduce heavy fuel loads.
- Remove dead or dying trees.
- Maintain defensible spacing where possible.

The best part? Small changes can make a big difference. Stop by and take a look at the garden next time you're passing Station 117, or visit [eastpiercefirer.org](http://eastpiercefirer.org) to learn more. We're all in this together, protecting our homes means protecting our neighborhood. ■



# Stay Safe on the Lake

There's nothing quite like a day out on the water. Sunshine, fresh air, and good company await. With a little preparation, you can make sure every trip stays fun from launch to dock. Here's what to keep in mind before you head out.

### Before You Leave the Dock

- Everyone wears a properly fitted life jacket. No exceptions.
- Avoid overloading your boat. Too many people or too much gear makes boats unstable and harder to maneuver.
- Keep weight low and movement limited to reduce the risk of capsizing.
- Check the weather forecast and be alert to changing conditions.

### Dress for the Water, Not the Air

- Even on a warm, sunny day, the water itself can be surprisingly cold. Wind and waves add to that chill, so bring layers, especially for kids, who lose body heat more quickly than adults.

### If Your Boat Capsizes

- Stay with the boat. Even a swamped vessel provides flotation and is much easier for rescuers to spot than a person alone in the water.

### Boat Sober

- Alcohol affects judgment, balance, coordination, and reaction time, and the sun, wind, and motion on the water make

those effects even stronger. Never drink and operate a boat.

### Bring a Phone

- Keep your cell phone in a waterproof bag so you can call for help if needed. Make sure it is charged before you leave the dock.

### Carbon Monoxide Awareness

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas found in boat exhaust. Because it stays close to the water, it can collect under swim platforms and inside enclosed cabins.
- “Teak surfing,” or holding onto the swim platform while a boat is running, is illegal and extremely dangerous.
- Symptoms include headache, dizziness, nausea, weakness, irritated eyes, confusion, and loss of consciousness. Exposure can become life-threatening quickly. Move the person to fresh air immediately and call 911.

### Boater Education Is Required

- Washington State law requires anyone age 12 or older who operates a motorized vessel of 15 horsepower or more, including personal watercraft, to carry a valid Boater Education Card.

A little preparation goes a long way toward a safe day on the water. Plan ahead, stay alert, and make safety part of every trip so everyone gets home safely. ■



ONE DONATION CAN SAVE UP TO THREE LIVES.

Make an appointment: [bloodworksnw.org/giveblood](http://bloodworksnw.org/giveblood) or call: 800-398-7888

### March

- Mar 16: Station 118, Edgewood
- Mar 19: Station 114, Lake Tapps
- Mar 23: Station 117, Tehaleh

### April

- Apr 28: Station 111, Bonney Lake

### June

- Jun 1: Station 117, Tehaleh
- Jun 8: Station 114, Lake Tapps

### July

- Jul 1: Station 118, Edgewood
- Jul 8: Station 111, Bonney Lake

### August

- Aug 10: Station 114, Lake Tapps
- Aug 17: Station 117, Tehaleh

### September

- Sep 8: Station 111, Bonney Lake

### October

- Oct 8: Station 118, Edgewood
- Oct 14: Station 114, Lake Tapps

### November

- Nov 2: Station 117, Tehaleh

### December

- Dec 7: Station 111, Bonney Lake



## 2025 Total Emergency Calls

Your EPFR firefighters responded to 13,313 emergency calls last year. The full 2025 Annual Report will be available April 2026 at [www.eastpiercefirer.org](http://www.eastpiercefirer.org)



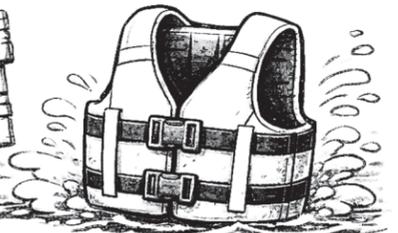
CALL TYPE

Emergency Medical Calls.....	9,661
*Good Intent.....	1,423
Public Assist.....	857
False Alarm.....	646
Fire.....	345
Hazardous Material.....	329
Other.....	52
<b>Total Emergency Calls.....</b>	<b>13,313</b>

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

# Gearing You Up for Summer Safety!

Pedals, paddles, and summer adventures—gear up safely before you go!



Life Jackets are available 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. Credit/debit cards accepted only.



Only need a life jacket for the day?

Short-term use loaners are available at the Headquarters Station and loaner kiosks at Allan Yorke Park (7203 W Tapps Hwy E, Bonney Lake).

### WHO IS EAST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE?

East Pierce Fire & Rescue was founded on a strong commitment to customer service. The district's *Vision, Mission, and Values* guide the district 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 a population of over 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 the community from nine fire stations, eight staffed and one dedicated marine rescue facility on Lake Tapps.

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
- Justin Evans
- Kevin Garling
- Randy Kroum
- Pat McElligott
- Pete Connell

### 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.

## Welcoming Our Newest EPFR Team Members

### MECHANIC - Kyle Toner

East Pierce welcomed Kyle Toner as our newest mechanic in November 2025.

He was drawn to East Pierce Fire & Rescue for the opportunity to serve a community he has long considered home. He grew up on the Enumclaw Plateau and spent much of his time in Bonney Lake, which he proudly still considers his hometown.

Public safety runs deep in Kyle's family, but he was encouraged early on to learn a vocation, he chose Diesel Technology. Today, that path has come full circle, allowing him to support public safety in the very community that helped shape him.

Kyle says what stands out most about EPFR is the people. "This organization is close knit and supportive. I've felt welcomed by everyone I've had the pleasure to meet."

Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his wife of 10 years, Tabitha, and their three kids. As a family, they enjoy working on truck projects together. Thanks for keeping our fleet road-ready, Kyle!



### PAYROLL ADMINISTRATOR - Jen Graves

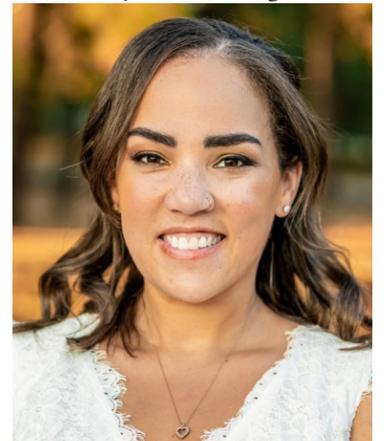
East Pierce welcomed Jen Graves as a Payroll Administrator in February 2026.

She was drawn to East Pierce Fire & Rescue because she lives in the district and feels personally connected to the mission. "These are my neighbors, friends, and families I care about. That makes this opportunity much more personal for me."

Born and raised in Puyallup, Jen built her career in municipal finance. She advanced through roles with the City of Federal Way before serving as Lead Finance Technician for the City of Lakewood. When the Payroll Administrator position opened at EPFR, she knew it was an opportunity she could not pass up.

Jen values the responsibility that comes with supporting a public safety agency. She is motivated by the challenge of ensuring complex payroll processes are handled accurately and on time, helping maintain trust and stability across the organization.

Outside of work, she enjoys traveling with her husband. Whether it is a weekend at Silverwood or a trip to the Dominican Republic, they value exploring new places together and taking time to recharge. Welcome Jen! ■



### Outdoor Burning Permits

Residential fire permits are available online from October 1st through May 31st in designated areas of the fire district, pending no active fire safety or air quality burn bans are in effect.

Visit [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org) to sign up, obtain a burn permit, and view regulations and burn area boundaries.

Or take a greener route! Instead of burning, consider chipping, composting, mulching, or hauling yard debris to a local recycle or transfer station.



scan QR code to learn more



## SCOUT NIGHT!

**FREE Event for Scouts (Up to 5th Grade)**

**Thursday, April 23, 2026**

**6:00 – 7:30 p.m.**

**Station 111 / Headquarters**  
8601 Main Street East  
Bonney Lake

**Pre-Registration Required!**

Hands-on learning stations including Home Safety, First Aid, Emergency Prep & more!

One registration per scout group.

### connect with us!



@EastPierceFire

info@eastpiercefirerescue.org

www.eastpiercefirerescue.org

253.863.1800

### 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.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org).

### 2026 Meeting Schedule

April 21 | May 19 | June 16 | July 21 | August 18

## 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 1:00–4:00 p.m.**

Apr 11 or 30 | May 7 or 16 | Jun 4 or 20 | Aug 6 or 22 | Sep 2 or 19

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 on-line at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org).

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

**LIFE JACKET SALES AND FITTING\*** Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Life jackets \$19 each. Station 111/Headquarters.

#### SAFE SITTER CLASSES

Now offered as a one day class at Station 111: Jul 6, 7, 27 or 28

Cost: \$45. To view class details and register on-line, visit [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org).

\* Sponsored by East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520