



# FIRE HOUSE NEWS

SERVING THE CITIZENS OF BONNEY LAKE, SUMNER, LAKE TAPPS, EDGEWOOD, MILTON, THE RIDGE COMMUNITIES AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

WINTER 2010

## Safety tips for the holidays

Did you know that home heating is among the leading causes of house fires both nationally and in Washington State? To prevent a fire in your home, keep furnishings and other combustibles at least 36 inches from all heating sources, especially portable heaters, stoves and fireplaces.

Keep wood stoves and fireplaces free of excess ash buildup. Excessive ash buildup prevents good circulation of air needed for combustion. "When removing ashes, always use a metal container with a tight-fitting cover and place ashes on the ground or cement outside away from structures. Ashes may contain smoldering charcoal that can start a fire," said East Pierce Firefighter-paramedic Jason Brooks.

### Christmas Trees

Water that tree!  
Christmas trees account for an average of 200 fires in the U.S. each year. Typically, shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters or matches start tree fires. Well-watered trees are not a problem. Dry and neglected trees can be.

"To avoid drying out your tree, keep it away from fireplaces and heat vents," said East Pierce Firefighter Brian Sargent.

### Holiday Lights

"Inspect lights for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up," said East Pierce Firefighter-paramedic Lori Eng.

Don't overload electrical outlets or link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. To protect against electric shock, connect strings of lights to circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) before plugging the cord into the outlet.

Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch. "Never leave holiday lights on unattended," Eng said.

### Candle Care

According to national statistics, candles are responsible for more house fires than any other single source. "A candle is an open flame," East Pierce Firefighter Matt Lowery said. "Regardless of the season, always be careful with candles."

Make sure candles are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked over by kids or pets. Never leave the room with candles burning.

Last, but not least, install smoke detectors on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area. Check to make sure they are in proper working order.

If you have questions about smoke alarms or need assistance installing them, call East Pierce Fire & Rescue at 253-863-1800 during regular business hours.

## Fire department tightens budget belt



The fire department expects revenues to drop a total of 16.5 to 17 percent in 2010 and 2011. Cuts to expenses are already being made.

Next year's estimated property taxes are \$17.7 million. Ambulance transport fees are expected to add another \$2 million. Currently, projected expenses for 2011 is \$22.6 million. Salaries comprise over 80 percent of the budget.

According to Thorson, the department is looking for ways to accomplish the core mission with less money. All divisions have already made budget cuts for this year and

Lower revenues have led East Pierce Fire & Rescue to re-examine all budget expenses for this year and 2011. "Like everyone else in these trying economic times, we are seeing reductions in our revenues and have to manage our money even more carefully," East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson said.

The two major sources of funding for East Pierce are the tax levy on personal property - which makes up nearly 90 percent of the department's operating funds - and emergency medical services transport fees, which contributes nine percent. All other income sources, including grants, add the last one percent. Citizens in the district pay \$1.50 per thousand in property taxes for fire service and \$0.50 for emergency medical service. Total revenues in 2009 were \$20.1 million.

East Pierce is expecting up to a 17 percent reduction in total assessed values for 2010 and 2011.

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## Santa is coming to your town

East Pierce firefighters will accompany Santa during his annual visit to neighborhoods in our district.

East Pierce Firefighter James Parke is spearheading the much-anticipated event. "Watch for emergency vehicles with lights on and Christmas music playing. They will cruise a few blocks ahead of Santa's sleigh to let you know Santa is coming," Parke said. "For safety reasons, please stay on the sidewalk and out of the road."

Santa's visit is sponsored by the International Association of Firefighters Local 3520 and the East Pierce Fire & Rescue Volunteer Firefighters' Association. Firefighters will be collecting donations for local food banks as they accompany Santa.

In the Bonney Lake, South Prairie, Lake Tapps and the Ridge communities, look for the fire engines and Santa's sleigh on Saturdays and Sundays beginning December 4. Exact dates and neighborhoods are listed on the Web at [www.eastpiercefirer.org](http://www.eastpiercefirer.org).

In Milton, the annual Santa Run and Christmas Tree lighting is scheduled for Saturday, December 4. The fire engines will also be



The firefighters will be accompanying Santa on his visits to see all the good girls and boys in the East Pierce Fire & Rescue service area beginning December 4. For details go to [www.eastpiercefirer.org](http://www.eastpiercefirer.org).

visiting neighborhoods that day, playing music and handing out candy canes to the kids.

On Saturday, December 19 the firefighters will be chauffeuring Santa Claus around the Edgewood neighborhoods from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you miss the jolly old man, stop by the Edgewood Fire Station, at 10105 24th Street East, from 4 to 5 p.m. that day. He will be handing out candy and visiting with all the good girls and boys.



For exact dates and neighborhoods, go to the East Pierce Fire & Rescue Web site at: [www.eastpiercefirer.org](http://www.eastpiercefirer.org).

East Pierce Fire and Rescue  
18421 Old Buckley Highway  
Bonney Lake, WA 98391

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## Budget

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the purchase of replacement equipment has been deferred. The chief said that savings from this year will put the department in a better position for next year. "It's the prudent thing to do," he said.

While the goal is to maintain current programs, costs are also increasing. Health insurance premiums for the employees will increase by 10 percent in 2011 and are expected to rise again in 2012.

In addition, the cost for critical drugs and medical supplies, fuel for the fire engines and medic units and required maintenance costs have also risen significantly.

The chief recently reported to the East Pierce Fire Commissioners that current cuts will allow the department to provide the same service for less money, but an additional loss of revenue will require some hard decisions. "We'll be okay for 2011, but if we have another double digit decrease in 2012, we will have to consider more drastic cuts," he said.

# Avoid winter weather emergencies

Weather forecasters are predicting wicked weather this winter. Just remember that the glistening white stuff and chilly temperatures can be as dangerous as they are beautiful.

According to East Pierce Fire & Rescue Assistant Chief James Jaques, the most common cold weather accident for our area is sledding mishaps. Emergency crews are often called to the scene of an accident where someone has run into another person or a stationary object.

"We see everything from broken limbs to head injuries," he said.

When sledding, try to pick a clear area free of rocks, trees or fences and never sled down onto a road. "Never, ever sled while holding onto a car or truck," Jaques said.

Although ice rescues are less common, they do happen here. Fire officials warn against going out onto any lake or pond, especially Lake Tapps.

Unlike most bodies of water, Lake Tapps is not shaped like a big bowl, making it difficult to judge ice thicknesses even near the shoreline. The lake is especially dangerous if the water has been drawn down after it has frozen. Lowering the water beneath the ice can leave little or no support, causing the ice to fracture under the

**"Several areas of our district are prone to flooding and could be cut off if the flooding is severe enough, particularly South Prairie."**

East Pierce Assistant Chief  
James Jaques

weight of a person or vehicle.

"We've seen people drive their motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, dune buggies, snow mobiles and even Volkswagens out on the lake," Jaques said. "To be safe, never take a vehicle out on any of the area's lakes or ponds."

Hypothermia is also a danger. It doesn't take below zero temperatures for someone to develop a cold-related medical condition. The elderly and the very young are especially susceptible to hypothermia, frostbite and other weather-related health problems.

A person affected by hypothermia may experience confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering. Signs of frostbite include gray, white or yellow skin discolora-

tion, numbness or waxy feeling skin. Call 9-1-1 immediately if you experience these symptoms. This is a serious medical emergency.

Our most common weather-related emergencies are wind and flooding. Be aware of potential flooding and obey evacuation orders. "Several areas of our district are prone to flooding and could be cut off if the flooding is severe enough, particularly South Prairie," Jaques said. "If you do not leave before the floods close all the roads, we cannot get to you to provide fire or emergency medical services. We don't ever want to see that happen."

For more winter weather tips, go to our Web site at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org).



Crashes caused by distracted drivers and tailgating are becoming increasing more common. Even a minor accident can lead to missed work, school or sports activities, not to mention the cost of repairs and hospital bills. A major crash could be deadly.

## Distracted drivers and tailgating: A potentially deadly combination

**M**ost of us were taught that driving should be our sole focus when behind the wheel. Unfortunately, that isn't always the case. In fact, distraction from the primary task of driving presents a serious and potentially deadly danger. The National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration reports that in 2008, nearly 6,000 people died and more than a half million were injured nationwide because of a distracted driver.

According to East Pierce Firefighter-paramedic Ted Rogowski, the problem is likely much bigger than reported.

"Whether the driver admits it or not, many of the crashes we see are due to a combination of distracted drivers and following too close to the car ahead," he said. "That doesn't even count the fender benders that don't require fire and police."

Distracted driving is defined as any non-driving activity that has the potential to distract the driver and increase the risk of a crash, such as eating, drinking, conversing with passengers or with someone on a cell phone.

There are three main types of distraction, including taking your eyes off the road, taking your hands off the wheel and taking your mind off what you are doing.

While it might not lead to a major crash, even a small fender bender can mean time off work or missed school and sports activities, not to mention repair costs.

Washington State law requires drivers to use hands-free devices when on the phone, but even that doesn't address the issue of distraction. "Studies have shown that it's the act of talking on the phone, not holding the phone that's the problem," Rogowski said. "The bottom line is, hang up your cell phone when you drive."



## "Why do so many fire engines show up when we call 9-1-1?"

By Assistant Chief Ed Goodlet

We get asked this question from time to time.

When dispatchers receive a 9-1-1 call, they send the closest unit to the fire or medical call. Each unit – fire engine or ambulance – has two or three firefighters. More than 80 percent of all calls need more than two people, so a second closest unit is also dispatched. Occasionally, a chief officer will also arrive for observation and training purposes. In the rural portions of our district, such as the areas beyond Wilkeson, a volunteer unit may respond, since they may be closer than the firefighters at the nearest staffed station.

Our response also depends on the type of call. Cardiac arrest calls, for instance, require a minimum of four responders, but six is preferred.

Although it may look like a lot of fire engines, especially for a medical call, all of our firefighters are also paramedics or emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and are trained to respond to medical emergencies.

A house or commercial building fire requires a minimum of 15 – 17 firefighters to adequately provide safety for the public and the firefighters. To get that many firefighters to the scene, five or six fire engines will respond to a fire, along with an ambulance should someone be hurt.

National standards recommend assuming the worst case scenario for serious calls. That means occasionally sending more rescuers than might be needed. We'd rather turn them away than lose precious time calling for backup.

Got questions for us? Email them to [Info@eastpiercefirerescue.org](mailto:Info@eastpiercefirerescue.org)

### Honor your hero

Pay tribute to a special firefighter, law officer or community leader this holiday season by purchasing an inscribed brick in the Chief Dan Packer Walk of Honor at our headquarters station. It's a thoughtful way to acknowledge those who have given unselfishly to improve and protect the lives of their fellow citizens. To purchase a brick, go to [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org) and click on Walk of Honor. The cost of an inscribed brick is \$50.







East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson presented Citizen Awards to Emily Crantz and James Larance (center) for saving Dennis Cuddie (pictured at the left of Chief Thorson), while the East Pierce crew that responded to the call looked on. They are (from left) Mason Lewis, Rich White and Jason Cancro. Orting Valley Fire & Rescue Chief Paul Webb is also pictured.

## Citizen CPR saves Sumner man

In September, East Pierce Fire Chief Jerry E. Thorson, Sumner Mayor Dave Enslow and the East Pierce Board of Fire Commissioners honored two Orting residents for saving the life of Dennis Cuddie.

The 68-year-old Sumner man had collapsed into cardiac arrest in his front yard. Although Cuddie was not easily visible from the street due to a hedge, Emily Crantz and James Larance, driving past in a van, saw Cuddie collapse. They immediately stopped and attended to the stricken man. While Larance administered CPR, Crantz called 9-1-1.

“Your efforts contributed to the patient being successfully revived by East Pierce paramedics,” Thorson said as he presented Crantz and Larance with a Good Samaritan Award. “Thanks to your quick actions, the patient is recovering at home with his wife. Your selfless actions in providing life-saving citizen CPR reflect the true meaning of being a “Good Samaritan.”

Cuddie, his wife and family also attended the ceremony. He thanked Crantz and Larance and the firefighters who helped save his life.

According to the American Heart Association, citizen CPR is key to maintaining blood flow until the firefighters arrive. The organization recently released the 2010 Guidelines for CPR, recommending a change in the sequence of CPR steps from airway-breathing-chest compressions to chest compressions–airway-breathing for adults, children and infants. The new recommendations are based on evidence that high-quality chest compressions are critical to patient survival. To assist citizens, 9-1-1 dispatchers are trained to provide CPR instruction over the phone.

East Pierce offers citizen CPR classes two and three times a month throughout the year. Classes are free to residents living in the East Pierce service area. For a list of dates and times, go to [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org) and click on Classes.

## Prep for severe weather

Winter storms and floods can be devastating, especially for those who are not prepared. Here's a check list you can use to prepare for winter emergencies.

### Develop a plan for gathering your family together.

- ❑ High winds and flooding often create traffic jams on all major arterials. Even just a downed tree or power lines can keep parents from their homes. Have a child care plan if you are unable to reach your children at school or home.
- ❑ Keep your child's emergency release card up to date.
- ❑ Make arrangements with a person outside the immediate area for family members to contact in case they get separated. This person should live far enough away so he or she won't be involved in the same emergency.
- ❑ Cell phones may not work and cordless phones need power. Keep an old-fashioned plug-in-type phone at home in case the power goes out.

### Keep fuel in your vehicle.

- ❑ Without electricity, gas stations are closed and those stations with power will have long lines.
- ❑ Whenever possible, keep the tank in your vehicle at least half full so you have enough gas to get home during an emergency or to evacuate to a safer area.

### Take care of your neighbors.

- ❑ The elderly, those confined to bed or a wheel chair and those who rely on medical equipment that requires electricity to operate may need extra assistance.
- ❑ Neighbors who don't speak English may also need your help.

### Use generators and heat sources wisely.

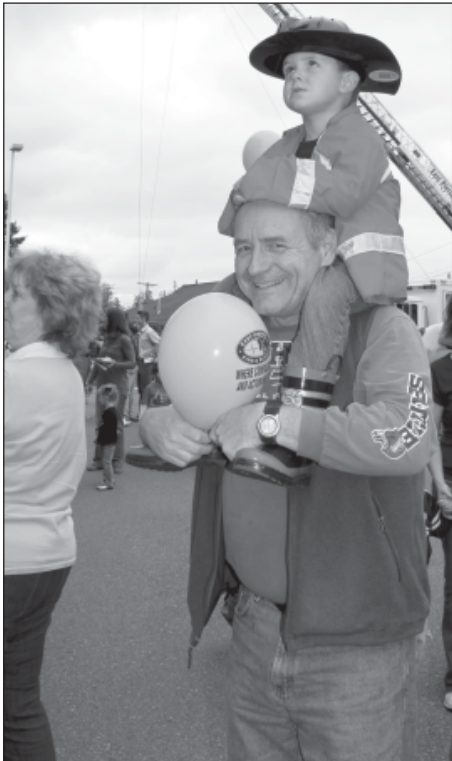
- ❑ Generators produce carbon monoxide that is deadly if inhaled. If you

- use a generator, make sure it exhausts well away from your home. Never place a generator indoors, including the garage.
- ❑ Before the power goes out, make sure all chimneys and wood stoves are clean and clear of debris.
- ❑ If you use a barbecue to cook food, always keep it outdoors and away from anything that could catch fire. Toxic smoke and gases can collect even in a garage.
- ❑ Keep furnishings and other combustibles at least 36 inches from all heating sources, especially portable heaters, stoves and fireplaces.
- ❑ Store matches and lighters out of the reach of children. Fires started by children often have tragic results.
- ❑ When using portable heaters, do not place them where it is possible for small children or pets to fall against them or to receive a contact burn.
- ❑ Avoid the use of extension cords with electric heaters. Turn off space heaters before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Keep food, water and cash on hand to last three days.**
- ❑ Every family should have at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and water. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water.
- ❑ Without power, the cash machines don't work and merchants cannot take credit cards. Be sure you have enough cash available to purchase additional food, water and fuel.
- ❑ All residents should have a first aid kit. For a complete list of what should be in your first aid kit, go to our Web site at [www.eastpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.eastpiercefirerescue.org).

## Open House huge hit



Record crowds helped us celebrate our 17th annual East Pierce Fire & Rescue Open House, October 2 at the headquarters station in Bonney Lake. The Open House and Safety Fair provides an opportunity for firefighters and other public safety agencies to showcase various programs and services. The event featured numerous booths with demonstrations and information from East Pierce Fire & Rescue, Bonney Lake Police Department, Joint Base Lewis-McChord's bomb squad, Department of Natural Resources, the Northwest Disaster Search Dogs, the Pierce County Sheriff's K-9 Unit and more.





## Sumner Pancake Breakfast

The public is invited to stop by the Sumner fire station from 7 a.m. to noon, Saturday, December 4 for the 15th Annual Sumner Pancake Breakfast, hosted by the firefighters of East Pierce Fire & Rescue. The Sumner fire station is located at 800 Harrison Street.

The cost is a \$3 donation. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

Firefighters, fire commissioners and local dignitaries will be flipping flapjacks and serving ham, coffee and orange juice while children visit with Santa.

Music will be provided by the Victor Falls Elementary School choir, led by Mark Edgbert. The



East Pierce Firefighters Matt Reinke (left) and Mitch Bylin helped serve more than 700 hungry people at last year's Breakfast.

performance begins at 9 a.m. The money raised benefits several charitable organizations, most notably the Sumner Family Center, a local program that provides support and services to families living within the Sumner School District, including Bonney Lake, South Prairie and the City of Sumner.

For the fifth year, East Pierce Firefighter-paramedic Rex Orcutt and his wife Cindy are serving as co-chairs. "It's a fantastic event – fun for the people who attend and a great service to the community," Orcutt said.

Last year, more than 700 people attended the breakfast. The money raised helped 650 local children.

## Bonney Lake tree lighting

A free, old-fashioned holiday celebration will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, December 4 at the East Pierce Fire & Rescue headquarters station, at 18421 Old Buckley Highway.

The annual Bonney Lake Tree Lighting is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Bonney Lake. To help get into the holiday mood, the Kiwanis provide free cookies and hot apple cider.



The festivities also include holiday music performed by area school children. Bonney Lake Mayor Neil Johnson will light the tree around 6:30 p.m. to signal the official start of the holiday season, followed by the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus aboard one of our fire engines. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be available for photos with the kids until 8 p.m. Don't miss it!

## 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 a concern for the employees and their families have become hallmarks of our culture.

East Pierce Fire & Rescue was created when the City of Bonney Lake Fire Department, Lake Tapps Fire and Pierce County Fire District 24 merged in 2000 with the goal of providing a seamless response to emergency situations.

In 2006, voters in Pierce County Fire District 12 and South Prairie Fire District 20 overwhelmingly passed a special election to merge the two districts with East Pierce.

Two years later, the citizens of the City of Sumner and Pierce County Fire District 1 also voted to join the East Pierce family.

On February 9, 2010, Edgewood residents voted in favor of merging with East Pierce.

Just last August, Milton residents voted to join East Pierce, bringing expanded fire, rescue and emergency medical services to their city.

Today, East Pierce serves a population of more than 85,000 living in and around Bonney Lake, Sumner, Lake Tapps, the Ridge Communities, South Prairie, Edgewood, Milton and Wilkeson. The district covers approximately 152 square miles and protects residents from 13 stations – six staffed and six 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 are able to respond to both medical emergencies and fires.

An independently-elected board of citizens governs the agency.

Additional information about East Pierce Fire & Rescue is available at our Web site, [www.eastpiercefir.org](http://www.eastpiercefir.org).

## East Pierce Classes and Meetings

### 2011 CPR and Basic First Aid Classes

Jan. 15, 21 or 29	<b>Where:</b> East Pierce Fire & Rescue headquarters station
Feb. 12 or 26	18421 Old Buckley Highway
Mar. 12, 18 or 26	Bonney Lake, WA
April 16 or 30	<b>When:</b> CPR classes are from 9 a.m. until noon
May 14, 20 or 21	First Aid classes are from 1 to 4 p.m.

Classes are **free** for citizens residing within the jurisdiction of East Pierce Fire & Rescue, including Sumner, Bonney Lake, Lake Tapps, Wilkeson, South Prairie and Edgewood. The cost for non-residents is \$30 for either a CPR or First Aid class, or \$45 for both. Call 253-863-1800 during regular business hours to register!

### East Pierce Fire and Rescue Fire Commissioner's Meetings

The public is welcome to attend commissioners' meetings at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month at the headquarters station, 18421 Old Buckley Highway, in Bonney Lake.

## Public Education Programs

East Pierce Fire & Rescue offers the following services:

### Bicycle Helmet Sales and Fitting\*

Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Helmets are sold for \$7 each. Exact change is appreciated.

### Life Jacket Sales and Fitting\*

Wearer must be present for custom fitting. Life jackets are sold for \$14 each. Exact change is appreciated.

### Safe Sitter Classes

Cost: \$30 Registration information and class schedules are available at [www.eastpiercefir.org](http://www.eastpiercefir.org).

### FREE CPR and First Aid Classes

Registration information and class schedules are available at [www.eastpiercefir.org](http://www.eastpiercefir.org). Free for East Pierce residents.

### FREE Life Jacket Loaner Program

Wearer must be present for fitting. Free loaner jackets are available at the headquarter's station, at 18421 Old Buckley Hwy.

### FREE Child Safety Seat Inspections

Call for an appointment. Our certified child passenger safety technicians will check to make sure your child is in the right seat, your seat is installed correctly and your child is placed in the seat correctly.

### FREE Station Tours

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

### FREE Smoke Alarm Installations

Call for an appointment. Includes smoke alarm with 10-year batteries.

### FREE Blood Pressure Checks

Stop by any staffed station during regular business hours. (Subject to staff availability.)

### FREE Fire Extinguisher Training

Learn how to use a fire extinguisher in case of a residential or commercial emergency. Call to register.

\*Sponsored by East Pierce Professional Firefighters Local 3520.

## East Pierce Fire & Rescue Staffed Fire Stations

Station 11	18421 Old Buckley Hwy, Bonney Lake (Headquarters Station)
Station 12	12006 - 214th Ave. E., Bonney Lake
Station 13	800 Harrison Street, Sumner
Station 14	3206 W. Tapps Drive E., Bonney Lake
Station 16	10515 - 234th Ave. E., Buckley
Station 18	10105 24th Street East, Edgewood



18421 Old Buckley Highway  
Bonney Lake, WA 98391

253-863-1800  
[www.eastpiercefir.org](http://www.eastpiercefir.org)

### East Pierce Fire Commissioners



Rick Kuss, Chair	Raymond Bunk	Mike Cathey
Edward Egan	Kevin Garling	Rick Kilbourn
Andrew Longstreth	Karlyne McGinnis	Roy "Red" Mendenhall
Dale Mitchell	Victor Proulx	Ron Scholz

### Jerry E. Thorson, Fire Chief

"Exceptional people providing compassionate service and rapid response to our community's diverse needs."