

The Monitor



WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE

Proudly serving the citizens of Lakewood and University Place

3631 DREXLER DRIVE WEST, UNIVERSITY PLACE, WA 98466 | www.westpierce.org

It is hard to believe four years have already passed since the Lakewood and University Place Fire Departments merged to create West Pierce Fire & Rescue. The first four years as a merged department have not been easy, as the assessed value of properties in the fire district have declined by more than 20%. This decline has drastically impacted our tax revenues. In response to this decline, we have worked diligently to re-invent ourselves and our operations. We have leveraged our merger to create greater efficiencies in your fire department while remaining focused on delivering first-class services in the most capable methods possible.

The economy has not been the only challenge for our department over the past few years. Since our merger in 2011, service demand has increased dramatically. Calls for service have increased close to 10% over the past four years, and the trend doesn't seem to be slowing. In the first quarter of 2015, call volume is already up 6% over the same time last year.

Even with the challenges we have faced with a declining economy and increasing service demand, we have not allowed our quality of service to slip. In 2014, the Washington State Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB) performed a review of the department. After an extensive evaluation of approximately 75 different performance measures, we retained our Public Protection Class 3 rating.

Fire departments are rated on a scale of 1-10. A Class 1 generally represents superior fire protection services, while Class 10 represents a department that doesn't meet the WSRB's minimum fire protection criteria. Achieving a Class

3 rating is extremely difficult and requires constant attention to ongoing quality improvement. Of the more than 600 fire departments in the state, only 35 have a Class 3 rating.

We have been very successful in maintaining service levels through some very difficult times, however we realize we wouldn't be successful without the support of the community. On August 4th, we will be seeking a renewal of our Maintenance and Operations Levy. This is not a new levy, but a renewal of our current levy that will expire this year. Through our continued efforts to develop cost-effective service delivery models, this levy is \$200,000 less, annually, when compared to the current levy renewed by voters in 2013.

By effectively managing our budget, aggressively seeking grant funding and constantly striving to develop more efficient service delivery methods, I am confident we will continue to maintain our financial stability and deliver the high caliber of service you have come to expect from West Pierce Fire & Rescue.

I am very proud of what we have accomplished as an organization and look forward to the great things we will achieve in the future. Thank you for your ongoing support and if you have any questions or concerns please call us at 253-564-1623.

Jim Sharp, Fire Chief

West Pierce Fire & Rescue Studies Community Risk and Responses

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is conducting a study regarding its community and the emergency services we provide. There are several key elements to this study, including the following:

- **A community risk assessment identifying both the fire and non-fire risks within our borders.** The risk assessment is developed utilizing demographic data, call histories and a site visit to all of our commercial properties.
- **An analysis of our current response capabilities.** This analysis includes identifying our current response times, times of the day when call volume is high, areas of the community where more calls occur and historical trends regarding call volume.
- **An analysis of the services currently provided.** This includes fire response, emergency medical services, water rescue, special rescue, public education, fire prevention and fire investigations.
- **A community expectations survey.** Community is very important to West Pierce Fire & Rescue and we want to make sure we are meeting your expectations. If you are interested in completing this survey, please take a moment and utilize the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JFYVYX8>

The purpose of this study is to assist West Pierce Fire & Rescue in making sound decisions for the future of the organization and to help ensure our services are as efficient and effective as possible. Following this study, West Pierce Fire & Rescue will evaluate the data to determine if there are any changes that need to be made to our current response model, such as where apparatus are located, how they will be staffed and what types of prevention programs we will offer. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Battalion Chief Hallie McCurdy at 253-983-4579.

Grants Help West Pierce Fire & Rescue Control Costs and Support Vital Services

Providing services in a cost effective manner is one of West Pierce Fire & Rescue's top priorities. One way this was achieved was through an aggressive grant program that helps to offset costs of maintaining emergency operations. Between 2012 and 2014, nearly 20 grants were received, saving the district over \$950,000.

The grants were received from local, state and federal agencies. Some were even received through private corporations and foundations. These grants help to maintain training programs, upgrade equipment, and support community-based programs, such as our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Highlights from the grant program over the last couple of years are listed below.

Command and Tactics Training

In 2012, funding was received for advanced training in fire command and tactics for all of our personnel.

Savings to the District: \$153,000

Smoke Alarms

In 2012, funding was received to purchase and install smoke alarms in homes throughout the community.

Savings to the District: \$70,000

Live Fire Training

In 2013, funding was received to provide live fire training to all of our firefighters.

Savings to the District: \$146,000

Medic Unit

In 2014, a new medic unit was purchased and placed in service to serve our community.

Savings to the District: \$265,000

Prevention Programs

From 2012-2014, funding was received for various programs, including emergency management, disaster preparedness and CERT programs.

Savings to the District: \$200,000

These grants help West Pierce Fire & Rescue continue to provide appropriate training, meet state and federal standards, and maintain our levels of service in a very difficult economy. Unfortunately, grant funding is becoming increasingly scarce and very competitive. West Pierce Fire & Rescue is dedicated to maintaining an aggressive grant program in order to receive as many grant awards as possible.



Types of Calls Responded to by West Pierce Fire & Rescue

When the former Lakewood and University Place Fire Departments were formed in the early 1940's, firefighters only responded to fires. In these early days, stations were located so crews could quickly arrive at burning structures. It soon became apparent the firefighter's ability to arrive on a scene quickly could be used for other types of emergencies as well. Today, West Pierce Fire & Rescue responds to a variety of incidents including emergency medical services, hazardous materials releases, technical rescue, water rescue, dive rescue, response to fire alarms and other various calls for public assistance.

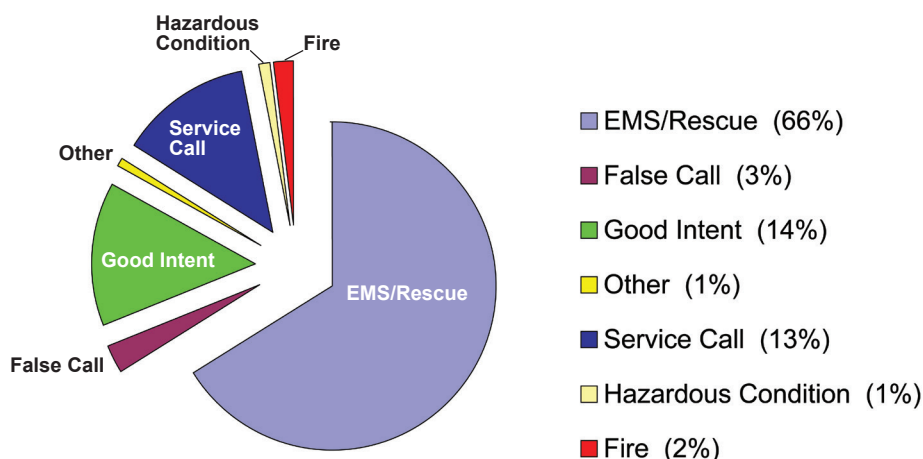
West Pierce Fire & Rescue responded to 14,085 calls for service last year. The following is a guide to the types of incidents that were responded to and the associated percentage of calls for each type in 2014.

Emergency Medical Services

The highest percentage of calls firefighters respond to are for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) which include heart attacks, strokes, vehicle collisions, broken bones, water rescue, etc. This category made up roughly 66% of the overall call volume.

Good Intent

The next highest category is good intent with 14% of the calls. Good intent includes calls where firefighters were dispatched and cancelled en route, such as controlled burning and steam, or other gas mistaken for smoke.



Service Call

Service calls comprise approximately 13% of responses. Service calls include patient assists, such as an elderly person who has fallen out of bed, lockouts with hazard, persons in distress, water problems, smoke or odor problems, animal problems or rescue, and public agency assistance.

False Call

False alarms and false calls include malicious or mischievous pulling of a fire alarm, bomb scares and fire alarm system malfunctions. Approximately 3% of this response load is attributed to these types of calls.

Fires

Included in this category are structure fires, brush fires and vehicle fires. While only 2% of the call volume today is attributed to fires, this still amounts to nearly one fire each day in the community. These types of incidents take a significant amount of time and resources when they do occur. Although fires occur much less frequently, they are extremely dangerous and pose significant risk to the community.

Hazardous Condition

The types of responses include combustible/flammable spills and leaks, chemical releases, structural collapse or electrical issues, such as downed power lines. These calls account for 1% of the overall responses.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue clearly responds to a variety of emergencies and firefighters are trained to respond to each and every one of them. Every firefighter is an EMT and nearly half of them are trained to the level of paramedic. There are also firefighters specially trained in technical rescue, hazardous materials response, water rescue and dive rescue. Rest assured, when you call 9-1-1 for any of these emergencies our firefighters will **Respond Efficiently, Execute Flawlessly And BE NICE!**

West Pierce Fire & Rescue Provides Fire & EMS Services at the 2015 US Open



It was February 2008 when the United States Golf Association (USGA) delivered the news that Chambers Bay would host one of golf's most prestigious events - the US Open Championship. Chambers Bay, a public course, was only six months old. Never before had the event been held in the Pacific Northwest. Seven years seemed like an eternity as everyone waited for the big show to roll into town. There was an abundance of both hype and hysteria. The economic boon, the traffic, the parking, the weather, and the dearth of hotels and restaurants. However, then University Place Fire Department was focused on the challenge of providing fire and emergency medical services for 250,000 spectators coming to our city of 31,000 residents. Fortunately, we would get a trial run. In August 2010, Chambers Bay hosted the US Amateur Championship. Although markedly smaller in scale, the Amateur provided an opportunity to test our plans and expectations. Chambers Bay, with its fescue-draped dunes and hills would prove to be an ice rink for spectators seeking prime viewing perches. We treated multiple ankle, leg, and arm injuries from falls.

With the invaluable experience from the Amateur, West Pierce Fire & Rescue (WPFR) began actively preparing for the US Open. A WPFR

planning team visited US Opens in Pennsylvania and North Carolina in 2013 and 2014, respectively. Working closely with their local fire departments, emergency medical service providers and hospitals, we studied their logistical and operational plans, their use of resources, and the numbers and type of injuries treated. We witnessed what 40,000 daily spectators looked like on a golf course. The rapid deployment of emergency resources along the course walking paths was challenging at best. We were immediately aware that we lacked a vital resource-EMS bike response teams. Bicycles were much more adept at navigating the crowds and reaching those in need quicker. We acquired six mountain bikes and trained 24 WPFR Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics for the work ahead. In addition to the bike teams, we staffed three specialized golf carts designed to transport stretcher patients to nearby First Aid tents or on-site WPFR ambulances. Daily, WPFR utilized 18 personnel who were dedicated solely to the event. There were no staffing reductions to our six fire stations throughout the week.

Due to the course topography and slick fescue grasses, we again treated patients with slip and fall injuries. However, the USGA had proactively roped off and limited access to certain

areas which reduced the number and severity of these injuries. With the unprecedented warm weather, we did respond to more heat-related illnesses than anticipated. With the exception of a few very small grass fires from discarded smoking materials, there were no significant fire events. We responded to an average of 20 incidents per day at Chambers Bay; numbers which were very consistent with those seen during the 2013 and 2014 Open Championships. We were extremely fortunate to work closely with MultiCare Health System who staffed three First Aid tents with physicians and nurses. Their support was invaluable as they cared for those with minor injuries and illnesses which helped to keep our ambulances on-site and available for critical patient transports to hospitals.

By all accounts, the 115th US Open was a hugely successful event. West Pierce Fire & Rescue is proud to have partnered with the Pierce County Sheriff's Department, the USGA, and MultiCare Health System in the provision of public safety.





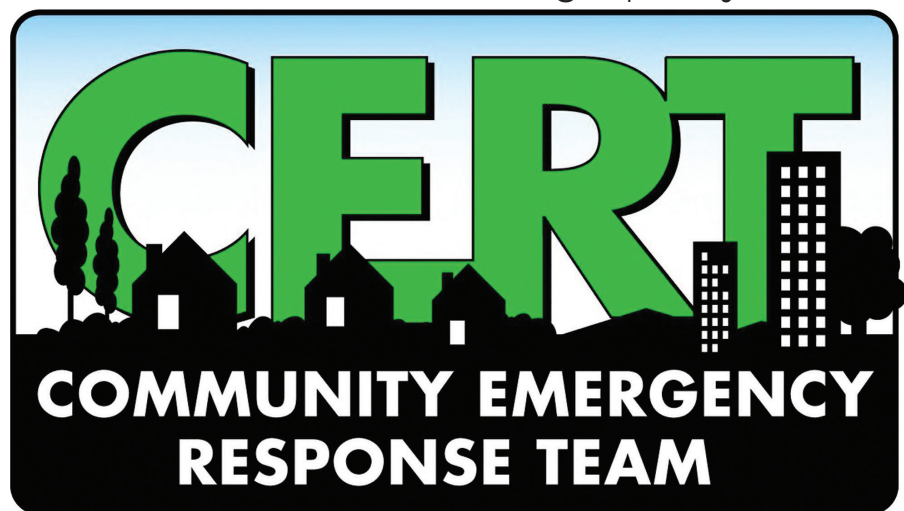
West Pierce Fire & Rescue is taking registrations for upcoming Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes for those who live or work in the West Pierce area. Since its start in 2009, West Pierce has trained over 400 citizens how to prepare for and respond to disasters or extreme emergencies.

The classes will follow a model developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and is offered in many communities across the United States. The idea behind this model is to teach people in neighborhoods how to help each other in the first few hours or days following a disaster, before emergency responders are able to get to them to render professional help. In these CERT classes, students will gain hands-on skills, such as how to put out small fires, render first aid in a disaster situation, be safe around utilities, and perform light search and rescue.

Six classes will be taught by West Pierce firefighters and paramedics who are experts in the subject matter. Classes will begin on September 15th and are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for three weeks from 6 - 9 pm, and culminate in a practical exercise to be held on Saturday, October 3rd from 10 am - 2 pm. The course is limited to 25 students and there are no prerequisites, other than a desire to learn and help others.

The classes are FREE!

For more information regarding CERT, the class schedule or to register, please contact Rachel Adler at 253-983-4564 or email cert@westpierce.org



West Pierce Fire & Rescue Emergency Management Resources Project

For years we have witnessed natural disasters and human-caused emergencies that have overwhelmed communities just like ours. Fortunately, our Fire Commissioners have provided a detailed approach for providing an all-inclusive community emergency management program. Our communities are becoming increasingly more knowledgeable about the disasters that may impact us, how to be self-sufficient, and to be prepared to take care of our neighbors and ourselves.

Our commitment to the community and each other is that we work together during a time of crisis, a major storm, or any other type of emergency. A major component of an effective emergency management program is conducting an assessment of what types of resources may be available locally to assist our service area before, during, or after an emergency or disaster. Resources come in many forms, such as dog and cat boarding, or hand shovels, buses and vans, or places that will host disaster information centers. Working together to conduct emergency management before, during, and/or in the recovery efforts of an emergency or disaster will make us all truly more disaster resilient.

If your business, congregation, service club or group would like to learn more about becoming a local resource during a disaster, please contact Emergency Management Coordinator Christine Badger at 253-983-4586 or christine.badger@westpierce.org.

Retirement



Kevin Kroenert
Captain
1981 - 2015



Bernice Hodge
Finance Specialist
1985 - 2015



Brian Crutcher
Firefighter
1985 - 2015



Eileen Creveling
Administrative Manager
1994 - 2015



Rob Richardson
Firefighter
1996 - 2015



Stephen Murphy
Battalion Chief
1998 - 2015



Byron Nelson
Dispatcher
1999 - 2015



Lisa Richardson
Dispatcher
1999 - 2015



Erin McMichael
Dispatcher
2002 - 2015



Gina Moberg
Dispatcher
2002 - 2015

Thank You West Pierce Fire & Rescue Retirees

Ten members of our organization turned the page to a new chapter in their life over the past year - Retirement. As the fire service is a close knit organization forged by strong camaraderie and trusted friendships, the departure of one Battalion Chief, one Captain, two Firefighters, one Finance Specialist, one Administrative Manager and four Dispatchers was indeed a loss to our "family" fabric. Collectively, 209 years of combined service and valuable experience will be leaving the organization.

Most of the retirees would agree, the decision to retire was very difficult. They will miss the people they worked with and the customers they have served along their career. As an organization, we are smiling! Smiling for the opportunity to have known and worked alongside these fine people and for the indelible marks they left on the organization. Smiling that our people have retired healthy and happy.

As one of our core leadership priorities, West Pierce strongly endorses SUCCESSION: Good leaders share their knowledge and strive to develop others into future leaders. We know that each and every retiree was a good leader, either by rank or by experience in their craft. The seeds of excellence were sown. Congratulations West Pierce retirees on a job well done!

Guide To Services

Please Contact Us

If you would like to inquire about any of these services, please contact us at 253-564-1623 or visit our website at www.westpierce.org.



Connect With Us



First Aid and CPR Classes

These classes are held the second Saturday of each month from 9 am - 5 pm. The course covers adult, child and infant CPR, AED training, and basic first aid. The cost is \$40.

Upcoming classes:

Aug. 8, Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14 and Dec. 12.

Please call to register.



Custom Fit Helmet Program

Bicycle helmets are available for \$7 and multi-sport helmets for \$10, cash only. Helmet fittings are scheduled by appointment only and the rider must be present in order to purchase.

Please call to schedule an appointment.



Is There A Working Smoke Alarm Installed Where You Sleep?

Location, location, location. The location of your smoke alarm matters. That is the message behind this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!"

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is joining the National Fire

Protection Association (NFPA) in spreading the word about the importance of having working smoke alarms in and outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement. Working smoke alarms save lives. According to the NFPA's latest research, working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire in half.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is dedicated to helping save lives by offering FREE smoke alarm installations to residents within Lakewood and University Place. Installations will be done by appointment by West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel.

To schedule an appointment, please call 253-983-4583.



School Programs

Fire and life safety presentations are conducted at each of the elementary schools in Lakewood and University Place. Fire safety is taught to Kindergarten and 2nd graders, child passenger safety to 1st graders, disaster preparedness to 3rd graders, how to be safe when participating in wheeled sports to 4th graders, and 5th graders learn basic first aid.



Preschool/Day Care Visits

Two free curriculums are offered to preschools and daycares in Lakewood and University Place called Learn Not to Burn and I Spot Something Hot. Teachers conduct several lessons of the curriculum and West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel will come in to teach the final lesson so small children learn firefighters are their friends.



Fire Station Tours

If you'd like to bring a group to the fire station for a visit, please give us a call to schedule.



Free Car Seat Checks

Did you know that 8 in 10 children are improperly restrained in the vehicle? West Pierce Fire & Rescue would like to help you make sure your child is properly restrained. If you are a resident of University Place or Lakewood, please contact us at 253-564-1623 to schedule an appointment with a Certified Car Seat Technician.

Upcoming Events

University Place Sun Fest - August 1, 2015

The University Place Sun Fest (formerly known as University Place Festival) is a one-day fun-filled event that runs from 10 am - 5 pm on the first Saturday in August. Enjoy live entertainment, Adult & Kids Fun Zone, vendors of all kinds, food, games and even a movie in the park at dusk, sponsored by Click! Cable TV. The Festival will be held at Market Square in University Place (36th & Bridgeport Way West). Stop by West Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 31, located at 3631 Drexler Drive West for an engine tour and free goodies for the kids. Life jackets and bike helmets will be available for purchase (cash only and rider must be present for custom fit). For more information - Visit the University Place Sun Fest Facebook page.

National Night Out Against Crime - August 4, 2015

This is a great opportunity for Lakewood and University Place citizens to create a safer community by hosting or attending a neighborhood block party. This year's event will be held on Tuesday, August 4th from 5 - 8 pm. Fire and police department personnel attend each block party to visit with citizens and offer various safety information. If you are interested in hosting a block party, please contact Lakewood Police Department at 253-983-7856 or University Place Police Department at 253-798-3141 to register.

CERT - September 15 through October 3, 2015

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training will be held at West Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 21, located at 5000 Steilacoom Boulevard SW. This class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 - 9 pm each night. October 3rd will be a culminating drill so participants can exercise what they have learned. Participants will be taught how to respond in a disaster situation, fire suppression, search and rescue, emergency medical triage, utility safety and team organization. For more information or to register, please contact Disaster Preparedness Coordinator Rachel Adler at 253-983-4564 or email cert@westpierce.org.

Safety Pumpkin Patch - October 24, 2015

West Pierce Fire & Rescue's 19th Annual Safety Pumpkin Patch will be held on October 24th from 10 am - 1 pm at West Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 21, located at 5000 Steilacoom Boulevard SW. There will be various activities for families, including custom helmet fitting (cash only and rider must be present for custom fit), a car seat check will be held, safety games, information booths, FREE digital photos for kids in costume and of course, pumpkins! Bring the family out for a day of fun! Please bring a non-perishable food donation if possible. For more information, please contact 253-564-1623.

WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE

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RENEWAL LEVY

West Pierce Fire & Rescue has a vital funding measure on the August 4th ballot. We will be asking voters to renew our Maintenance and Operations Levy, which provides the funding necessary to maintain the high level of service you currently receive today. This four-year levy is necessary to fund over 35% of the fire district's operating budget for 2016 through 2019.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue has worked diligently to develop cost-effective service delivery models, in order to provide the highest level of fire and emergency services possible. Through these efforts, this levy is \$200,000 less, annually, compared to the current levy renewed by voters in 2013.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSITION 1 WILL ALLOW US TO:

- Maintain quick response times for fire and medical aid calls.
- Maintain rapid hospital transport for critical medical and trauma patients.
- Maintain quality training for our firefighters and paramedics.
- Maintain the current level of exceptional service the citizens of University Place and Lakewood have come to expect.

If you have any questions, please contact
Fire Chief Jim Sharp or
Deputy Chief Mitch Sagers
at 253-564-1623