



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE

3631 DREXLER DRIVE WEST
UNIVERSITY PLACE, WA 98466



OUR MISSION

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is a community partner dedicated to saving lives, improving health and safety, and protecting property.

OUR VISION

To be a progressive community and industry leader that readily adapts to the needs of current and future generations.

ABOUT WEST PIERCE

WPFR protects 31 square miles and serves a population of approximately 100,000 people. WPFR provides service to the cities of Lakewood and University Place, which are incorporated within the fire district and contracted emergency services to the Town of Steilacoom. There are six fire stations that operate 24 hours per day and are located strategically throughout the District.

Services provided to the community include: fire suppression, emergency medical services and transport, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, special operations, fire prevention, inspections, code enforcement, fire investigation, and community risk reduction education.

WPFR protects many bodies of water throughout the District. Three boats are in service to respond to incidents occurring on Puget Sound and on any of the many lakes. Due to the different types of water responses, WPFR has specialized teams, including marine pilots, divers and rescue swimmers.

2022 TIMELINE

Coordinated CARE Program - March

This program was implemented to connect patients with appropriate resources outside of the 9-1-1 system.

Battalion 31 - April

The second battalion chief was reinstated to enhance overall scene and firefighter safety.

Red Knights Recruit Academy - May

Newest firefighters graduated after 13 weeks of training before going to shift to serve the community.

Wildland Urban Interface training - June

All firefighters completed wildland firefighting training through a grant-funded program.

Youth Academy - June

The 4th annual Youth Academy program was held to expose high school students to a potential career in the fire service.

Rescue 20 - September

A new, partially grant-funded technical rescue apparatus was placed in service and responds county-wide to these high-risk responses.

Community Risk Reduction School Programs - September

Public educators returned to teach in classrooms in schools after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.

Squad 31 - October

The second squad unit was placed in service to enhance service delivery.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

In 2022, WPFR responded to 17,721 calls for service, where nearly 80% were for medical aid. Of the call type categories to the right, the Fire & Hazards category represents our high-risk, lower frequency calls. These calls place responders in dangerous situations, require more resources and pose significant risk to the community.

These types of responses include all types of fires, combustible/flammable liquid spills and leaks, chemical releases, structural collapse, and electrical issues, such as downed power lines. Many of these calls require specialized training to mitigate them safely. While crews respond to fewer fire and hazardous conditions calls than medical aid, WPFR averages five of these incidents per day.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue responds to a variety of emergencies and firefighters are trained to respond to each and every one of them. Every firefighter is an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and nearly one quarter of them are trained to the level of Paramedic. There are also firefighters specially trained in technical rescue, hazardous materials response, water and dive rescue.

In addition to 9-1-1 responses, WPFR Chaplains spend their time meeting with residents in need, supporting WPFR personnel and their families, training responders on the importance of self-care, and assisting with District events and trainings.

Rest assured, when 9-1-1 is called for an emergency, WPFR will Respond Efficiently • Execute Flawlessly • **BE NICE!**





2022 RESPONSES

Emergency Medical Services: **14,151**

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls are for medical aid responses that include caring for a patient. This could range from a cardiac arrest to a motor vehicle collision to difficulty breathing, and a variety of calls in between.

WPFR handles transporting patients to the hospital, which is the result of approximately 45% of all EMS calls.

Fire & Hazards: **2,171**

This category is a combination of call types, such as fires, combustible/flammable liquid spills and leaks, chemical releases, structural collapse, ruptures, explosions, etc.

While these numbers do not represent the majority of WPFR's call volume, they are of high risk to firefighters and the community. They take additional resources and result in an average of five calls per day.

Good Intent & Service: **1,399**

Good intent calls may include responses where firefighters were dispatched and canceled en route, such as controlled burning and steam, or other gas mistaken for smoke.

Service calls may include patient assists (such as a person who has fallen out of bed), lockouts with hazard, water problems, smoke or odor problems, animal rescue and public agency assistance.

TOTAL CALL VOLUME: 17,721





ENHANCED SERVICE DELIVERY

With 9-1-1 calls for service continually increasing, WPFR continues to evolve as an all-hazards response provider. Adaptive approaches in resource deployment to address the demands of increased call volume has been essential to the needs of the community.

It is important to evaluate these needs on a regular basis to ensure the highest quality services are delivered. WPFR has implemented changes to enhance both fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) resource delivery to better serve the community.

In 2020, WPFR implemented a two-person resource known as a “Squad” on a trial basis. The Squad responds in a heavy-duty passenger-style pickup truck with a cache of tools and equipment. The primary task of this smaller resource is to provide some relief to the busier, larger, conventional apparatus, like fire engines or a ladder truck, during peak times throughout the day.

The Squad was implemented permanently in 2021, after much success during its trial period and is stationed in Lakewood. In 2022, a second unit was implemented to further increase service capabilities and is stationed in University Place.

Another enhancement was reinstating Battalion 31 in University Place early in 2022. When the Lakewood and University Place Fire Departments merged to create WPFR in 2011, there were two battalion chiefs to manage day-to-day field operations. Due to lingering financial challenges related to the recession, the District eliminated one of these positions.

Since then, call volume has increased over 30%, showing that re-establishing a second battalion will greatly improve overall emergency scene supervision and firefighter safety. Since Battalion 31 went in service, WPFR has seen great success with overall span of control on large-scale incidents.

CASCADIA RISING

The West Pierce Emergency Management Coalition (WPEMC) worked together on a state-wide exercise called Cascadia Rising in June 2022. WPEMC is made up of personnel from West Pierce Fire & Rescue (WPFR), the cities of Lakewood and University Place, and the Town of Steilacoom.

The premise of this emergency management exercise was to simulate what would happen as a result of a 9.0 earthquake. In the scenario, destruction and impact was seen in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia, creating a need for responders to not only understand how to respond within WPFR's jurisdiction, but on a regional basis.

The first day of the exercise included mostly West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel and focused on the initial impact of the earthquake, within the first six hours of the response. Exercises like this not only help WPFR prepare for response efforts, but reinforce the technical skills needed by firefighters to respond to such a large-scale incident.

On the second day, members of each agency within the WPEMC worked together within the incident management system. The focus of this exercise was the impact of the earthquake four days after and beyond. Training around these technical skills are typically held with consistency, but were paused for the past two years due to COVID restrictions. This was the first major exercise conducted by the coalition since it was created in January 2020.

These trainings afforded the opportunity for all agencies to practice these essential skills. Although these types of incidents are low in frequency, they are highly dangerous and require all resources available. This gives the cities, fire and police departments the ability to work together to learn how to best mitigate the situation.

These exercises also offer the WPEMC coalition the opportunity to test and evaluate the plans in place to ensure they are working properly. This is the time to determine if changes need to be made to such emergency management plans to better serve the community when it needs us most.



OPERATIONS



2022: BY THE NUMBERS

West Pierce Fire & Rescue (WPFR) provides a variety of services to the community, which include: fire suppression, emergency medical services and transport, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, special operations, fire prevention, inspections, code enforcement, fire investigation, and community risk reduction education.

In 2022, WPFR is proud to have served the community in a variety of ways, including those listed below. While these do not include 9-1-1 calls, it shows the amount of work WPFR personnel do every day to continually ensure the safety of the community.

353

PUBLIC RECORDS
REQUESTS FULFILLED

58

FIRE INVESTIGATIONS
COMPLETED

1,845

FIRE INSPECTIONS
COMPLETED

26

CAR SEATS
INSTALLED

1,682,095

GRANT DOLLARS
AWARDED

486

BIKE HELMETS & LIFE
JACKETS FITTED

574

SMOKE ALARMS
INSTALLED

469

PROJECT PLANS
REVIEWED

29

COMMUNITY
EVENTS ATTENDED

62

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT
PARTIES ATTENDED

108

CLASSROOMS
VISITED

36

SAFE SITTER STUDENTS
GRADUATED



TRAINING HOURS

Being properly equipped and trained to handle any incident is crucial. These categories reflect the training firefighters maintain annually.

Fire Suppression: 23,976

Operations level training for firefighters, such as training center drills, live fire, firefighter rescue, active shooter, etc.

Emergency Medical Services: 9,094

Continuing medical education for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and Paramedics.

Recruit Training: 7,140

All training, for both recruits and instructors, during the Red Knights Recruit Academy.

Hazardous Materials: 3,235

Hazardous conditions training, both at the operations level for all firefighters and for those specially trained to respond to such incidents.

Officer Development: 2,732

Continuing education and leadership training as personnel move up in rank, whether when promoted or acting in a supervisory position.

Driver / Operator: 1,970

Emergency response vehicle driving training.

Water Rescue: 1,314

All water-related training fields, such as rescue swimmer, dive and marine pilot programs.

Technical Rescue: 1,175

Specialized training, including trench rescue, rope and rescue rigging, structural collapse and confined space.

TOTAL TRAINING HOURS: 50,636

CONNECTED CARE

In 2022, West Pierce Fire & Rescue (WPFR) implemented a Connected Community Access, Referral and Education (CARE) program which works to identify and assist those in need of services, but not the 9-1-1 system. The goal of this program is to address commonly identified barriers to appropriate healthcare access, improve community health and reduce the utilization of emergency medical resources whenever possible.

WPFR's Connected CARE Program Manager, Karen Gilbert, has been a Registered Nurse for 26 years, where 11 were dedicated to case management. She is an integral part in helping those in the community who need it. Gilbert works with those who need assistance navigating areas such as facility placement, transportation, food, social services, chronic disease management, healthcare access and behavioral health, to name a few.

Gilbert also collaborates with the Lakewood Police Department's Behavioral Health Team (pictured to the right) and other agencies who provide vital services in the community. Often times, police and firefighters will respond to 9-1-1 calls where people need help finding the appropriate community services. By having programs available within both agencies, it helps to ensure the community is being provided the highest levels of service.

Historically, firefighters have not been trained in how to access these types of resources or how to navigate and coordinate them for patients. Firefighters are being trained by Gilbert to recognize and identify patients in need of these types of resources. After referring patients directly to her, she can evaluate their medical, social and behavioral health needs and find the appropriate resource to connect them.

Implementing this program addresses an ongoing need within the community. Some patients have used 9-1-1 and the emergency room as the first option to access care. Our goal is to provide patients with education on available resources, empowering them to manage their own healthcare, mental health and social needs.





EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Retirements & Resignations

Battalion Chief Tim LaRue
Battalion Chief Jeff Axtell
Captain Todd Atkins
Captain Jeff Tatom
Firefighter/Paramedic Denny Woxen
Firefighter Stephen Corey
Facilities Maintenance Technician Herb Cabe
Emergency Management Coordinator Chris Badger
Firefighter/Paramedic Christina Webb
Firefighter/Paramedic Andrew Douglas
Firefighter Nicholas Terry
Emergency Management Coordinator Josh Brown

Promotions

Assistant Chief Scott Kelly
Battalion Chief Nic Britton
Battalion Chief Layne Bladow
Battalion Chief Mark Giron
Battalion Chief David Kuhn
Battalion Chief Steve Vukich
Captain Kyle Clark
Captain Collin Murphy
Captain Jason Tinsley
Captain Evan Bratz
Captain Jerry Hamilton
Captain Tyler Newton
Captain John Burg
Captain Robert Duhamel
Captain Jeff Leuschen
Captain Dave Emmons
Captain Kirk Lackermayer
Captain Travis Smith
Captain Brian Johnson
Captain John Craig
Captain Lisa Morin





EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Promotions, continued

Firefighter/Engineer Jeff Walker
Firefighter/Engineer Matt Sheets
Firefighter/Engineer Larry Silva
Firefighter/Engineer Chad Walker
Firefighter/Engineer Ken Rogers

New Hires

Firefighter Christian Harriage
Firefighter Trenton Mahan
Firefighter Steven Saner
Firefighter Matthew Gall
Firefighter Todd Fenn
Firefighter Matthew Spilde
Firefighter Riley Kitchen
Firefighter Tyler Bertram
Firefighter Steven Cooper
Firefighter Leon Aldrich
Firefighter Nicholas Perez
Firefighter Vincent Hurtado
Firefighter Nathaniel Sagdahl
Firefighter Anissa Lee
Firefighter Joshua Schukar
Data Analyst Ashley Becker
Connected CARE Program Manager Karen Gilbert
Chaplain Edmund Jacobs
Facilities Maintenance Technician Joseph Forbes
Human Resource Analyst Alix Baty
Firefighter/Paramedic Rhys Green
Firefighter/Paramedic Sehar Caldwell
Firefighter/Paramedic Chad Schoonhoven
Firefighter/Paramedic Kevin Watson
Firefighter/Paramedic Scott Roy
Firefighter/Paramedic Alec Wilkins
Firefighter/Paramedic Cole Evenson
Emergency Management Coordinator Serena Rotondo



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