

THE MONITOR

News from West Pierce Fire & Rescue

Proudly serving the communities of Lakewood, University Place and Steilacoom





Letter from the Chief

In the fire service, it is not uncommon to plan for the worst and hope for the best. While this may seem pessimistic, the information that comes through in a 9-1-1 call is not always the full picture of what firefighters are responding to. Training occurs daily in an effort to prepare firefighters for anything they may face. In many training exercises, we try to establish an extremely complex scenario in the hopes we won't be caught off-guard by an unusual situation. Quite often, these training scenarios are so complex our personnel will make the comment, "what are the chances something like this could ever happen?" Over the past year, West Pierce Fire & Rescue (WPFR) has been put to the test and reminded just how complex things can get.

In July of 2017, an Amtrak passenger train carrying over 250 passengers derailed in the Town of Steilacoom. With a plan for high-speed trains to begin traveling through the City of Lakewood, our department spent an extensive amount of time training and preparing for this type of an event. This training gave us the necessary expertise to quickly and safely mitigate the situation and get everyone off the train without any significant injuries.

Most firefighters will go through their entire career without a train derailment. For WPFR, it was less than six months later when a much more devastating and tragic derailment happened south of the City of DuPont. While WPFR wasn't the lead agency in responding to this event, we did have an active role in patient care, hazardous materials mitigation, command and recovery from the incident. Again, your firefighters were trained for this type of event, and unfortunately, they already had train derailment experience on their resumes.

A passenger train derailling at high speed on a major freeway during rush hour is a highly complex incident. You would think something that challenging may never happen again. That all changed in August of this year, when a plane was stolen from SeaTac International Airport and crash landed on Ketron Island. The island is an unincorporated part of Pierce County with no emergency response services. This incident initially was dispatched as a water rescue near JBLM, so WPFR crews responded as such. Once more detailed information became available, and understanding this area is unprotected, your firefighters recognized the need to respond and went to work.

The operation was very complicated and required assistance from fire departments across the county. Once crews made their way to Ketron, they located the crash site in a heavily wooded area at the south end of the island. They used tractors to build make-shift roads in order to reach the crash site and then worked through the night to bring the fire from the wreckage under control.

In the fire service, you never know what can happen. At West Pierce Fire & Rescue, we are committed to keeping our personnel fully trained and prepared for any emergency, regardless of how challenging it may be.

Jim Sharp
Fire Chief

Hazardous Materials Response is a Team Effort

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is an all-hazards response fire department, which means it is imperative to have firefighters trained in many specialty areas. One crucial area in fire service responses is hazardous materials mitigation.

In 2007, WPFR entered into an agreement with four other local fire agencies to help mitigate hazardous materials incidents throughout the county. This team is known as the Pierce County Hazardous Incident Team, or PCHIT. Graham Fire & Medic One is the lead agency for this cooperative, which also consists of East Pierce Fire & Rescue, Central Pierce Fire & Rescue, Graham Fire & Rescue and Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One. There are currently 62 firefighters throughout all of these agencies who make up this team.

While PCHIT is essential in mitigating large hazardous materials incidents county-wide, it is important to know that every WPFR firefighter is trained in this area. Sixteen of WPFR's firefighters have received additional training to become HazMat Technicians and are members of PCHIT.

Quarterly drills and training sessions are held for the entire PCHIT team in addition to ongoing online training to keep skills fresh. Two regional drills are held annually, which include other regional partners outside of the member agencies on the team, such as the Tacoma Fire Department, JBLM HazMat, 10th Civil Support Team and the Department of Ecology.

Funding for this team is essential to its success. While each agency is responsible for the continuing education and training of its own team members, PCHIT has received many grants over the years. Since 2015, more than \$500,000 has been awarded for equipment, training and exercises.

In the last two years alone, WPFR has responded to 102 hazardous materials incidents. While not all of these have been large-scale responses, these incidents present a high risk to life and require skilled individuals to mitigate the emergency safely for responders and the community.

It is essential to the success of every fire department to be able to mitigate an incident or situation with speed and safety. PCHIT has been able to do just that for not only the West Pierce community, but throughout Pierce County.

Grants Help 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 is achieved is through an aggressive grant program that helps to offset costs of maintaining emergency operations. Since September 2017, WPFR has saved nearly half a million dollars thanks to grant awards.

Grants are requested and received from local, state and federal agencies, as well as private corporations and foundations. This type of funding helps maintain training programs, upgrade equipment, and support community-based programs. Highlights from the grant program over the last year are listed below.

Live Fire Training

This grant funded live fire training for all WPFR firefighters, which is required by Washington State law every three years.

Savings to the District: \$225,000

Hazardous Materials

This grant funded equipment and supplies, including, but not limited to, air monitors, hose and nozzles needed in the event of a hazardous materials spill.

Savings to the District: \$107,000

Smoke Alarms

This grant funded WPFR's smoke alarm program, which included installing smoke alarms in pre-determined high-risk areas within the District. Two major components this grant funded were the purchase of 6,000 smoke alarms and a bilingual program coordinator.

Savings to the District: \$158,106

TOTAL SAVINGS: \$490,106

A photograph of a red fire truck parked on a street. Several children are gathered around the truck, looking at it with interest. A man in a blue uniform, likely a firefighter, is standing near the truck. The background shows a clear blue sky with some clouds and a residential building.

Upcoming Events

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

This year's Fire Prevention Week theme is "**Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware. Fires can happen anywhere**", which works to educate people about these three basic, but essential, steps to reduce the likelihood of having a fire -- and how to escape safely in the event of one.

When: October 7-13

TRUCK & TRACTOR DAY

Join us at the City of Lakewood's Truck & Tractor Day for free hayrides, hard hats, and pumpkins (while supplies last). Children can climb on dozens of giant trucks (including our fire engine!) and tractors and sit in the driver's seat and honk the horn. Make this favorite fall festival a family tradition!

When: October 13 from 11 am - 3 pm

Where: Fort Steilacoom Park, Lakewood

FALL SAFETY DAY

Join us for Fall Safety Day where there will be great information and activities for families and of course, free pumpkins for each child! Bring the family out for a day of fun!

When: October 20 from 10 am - 1 pm

Where: Station 21; 5000 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood

FIRST AID & CPR CLASS

This basic first aid and CPR course meets Labor & Industries and Department of Social & Health Services standards and cards are recognized for two years. This course does NOT meet the requirements for the Healthcare Provider course. Cost is \$60 per student and pre-registration (including payment) are required.

When: November 3 from 9 am - 5 pm

Where: Station 20; 10928 Pacific Highway SW, Lakewood

SANTA AT THE STATION

Santa is coming to town twice this year! No photographer will be on site, but parents are welcome to take photos of their own children.

When: December 5 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Where: Station 31; 3631 Drexler Drive W, University Place

When: December 12 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Where: Station 21; 5000 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood

CERT CLASSES - 2019 schedule coming soon!

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes teach residents how to help themselves in the first few hours or days following a disaster, before emergency responders are able to reach them to render professional help. Visit our website for more information and the 2019 schedule as it becomes available.

Guide to Services



PRESCHOOL & DAYCARE EDUCATION

Two fire safety curriculum are available for preschools and daycares to use in the classroom at no cost.

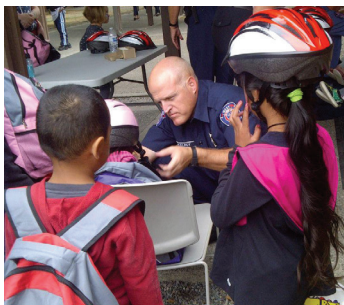
Teachers conduct several lessons of the curriculum and West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel will come in to teach the final lesson so small children learn firefighters are their friends.



BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS

Stop by any fire station to have your blood pressure checked!

Please be advised when firefighters are out of the station on 9-1-1 calls, there may not be anyone available to assist. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.



CUSTOM-FIT HELMETS & LIFE JACKETS

Bicycle helmets are available for \$7, multi-sport helmets for \$10, and life jackets are \$14; cash only, please.

Fittings are scheduled by appointment and the wearer must be present in order to purchase. Please call to schedule an appointment.



CAR SEAT INSTALLATIONS & CHECKS

Did you know that 80 percent of children are improperly restrained in vehicles?

Residents within the West Pierce service area may call to schedule an appointment with a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician to have their car seat installed or checked for proper installation.



FIRE STATION TOURS

Station tours are available for community groups to see where firefighters spend their day. Safety talks and tours of the station and apparatus are held, all while learning what it's like to be a firefighter.

If you would like to bring a group to the fire station for a visit, please call to schedule.

Community Survey

West Pierce Fire & Rescue wants to hear from you! If you live or work within the cities of Lakewood, University Place or Steilacoom, please consider filling out this short Community Survey.

This survey is being used by WPFR's Strategic Planning committee to improve services for the community.

www.surveymonkey.com/r/westpierce



Connect with Us!

Looking for more information on anything in this document, events or recent news from West Pierce Fire & Rescue? Connect with us!

Station 31 (Headquarters)
3631 Drexler Drive West
University Place, WA 98466

Non-emergency (business) line
253.564.1623

www.westpierce.org

Follow Us on Social Media



Smoke Alarm Grant Focuses on High-Risk Residences

Home fires are one of the leading causes of fire deaths in the United States. West Pierce Fire & Rescue has dedicated countless hours to educating the community about the importance of smoke alarms and fire safety education.

Last September, WPFR was awarded \$158,106 in grant funding to focus lifesaving efforts in high-risk multi-family dwellings. These dollars provided WPFR with smoke alarms, printed safety materials and a bilingual program coordinator. Thanks to this grant, a robust smoke alarm installation and education program has come to fruition, which has targeted some of the oldest apartment complexes and mobile home parks within West Pierce's borders.

Should a fire occur, 336 structures were identified within Lakewood and University Place to be the highest threat to life. Of those structures, 50 of them were identified as the oldest and at the highest risk.

Property owners and management teams were engaged in making these residences a safer place to live and allowed WPFR personnel to install new smoke alarms in the units. WPFR has also been successful in providing prevention and education messages focused on fire safety, and installing and maintaining smoke alarms in homes within the Spanish speaking community.

To date, nearly all of the high-risk complexes have been contacted and more than 5,500 smoke alarms have been installed in 2,000 residences. This funding source has provided outreach in the community that has proven to be immeasurable.

Second Annual Youth Fire Academy Graduates 24 Students

Last summer, West Pierce Fire & Rescue hosted its first Youth Academy for high school students interested in a career in the fire service. The program was a great success, however, it was a fun challenge to see how it could be even better. Adjustments were made and over the course of a weekend in late July, WPFR had the pleasure of hosting the second annual Youth Academy.

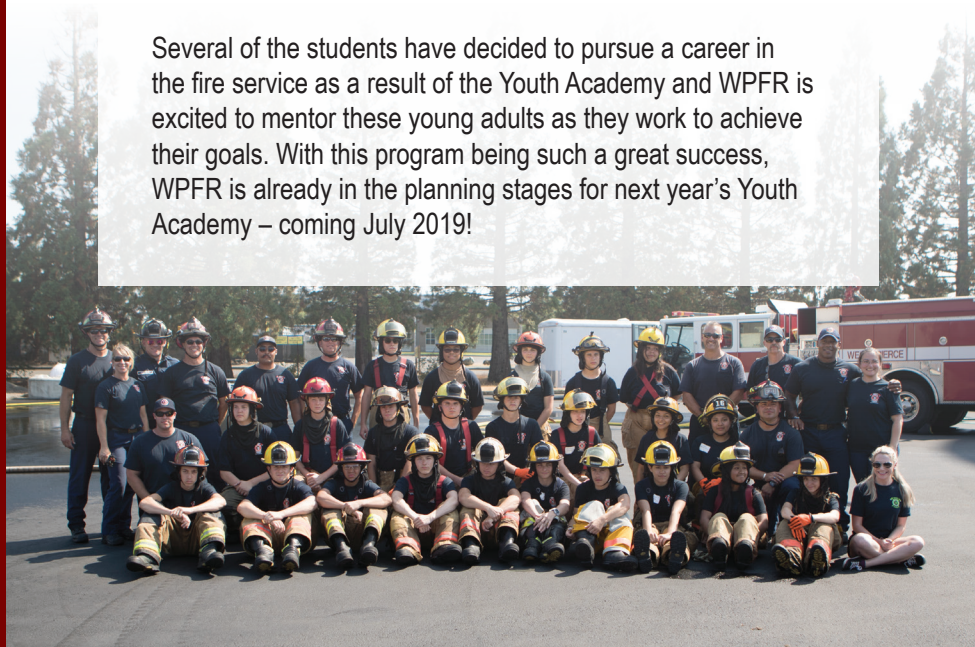
Enthusiastic WPFR personnel guided 24 students through various firefighter skill stations throughout the weekend. These hard working students from Curtis, Lakes, Clover Park, Harrison Prep and Lakewood Baptist High Schools successfully completed the program while having a great time.

The students rotated through five firefighter skill stations each day. They learned tactics, such as forcible entry, search and rescue, ground ladders, ventilation, first aid, hose skills, vehicle extrication, climbing a 105-foot aerial ladder, and extinguishing live fire with fire extinguishers. These skill stations were chosen because they are tasks every firefighter is required to perform. In addition, knowing how to perform CPR, administer basic first aid, and deploying a fire extinguisher are life skills that anyone can benefit from.

It was a genuine pleasure having the opportunity to share our knowledge and craft with these students. They worked extremely hard and gave it their all in the blazing heat.

A graduation ceremony was conducted in front of the Board of Fire Commissioners after the academy was completed. Each student was presented with a certificate of completion and a fire department coin in front of family, friends, chiefs, commissioners, and firefighters. This was truly a wonderful and positive experience for all involved.

Several of the students have decided to pursue a career in the fire service as a result of the Youth Academy and WPFR is excited to mentor these young adults as they work to achieve their goals. With this program being such a great success, WPFR is already in the planning stages for next year's Youth Academy – coming July 2019!





Anatomy of an EMS Call

When calling 9-1-1 for a medical emergency, the nature of the incident may determine the number of apparatus and personnel responding. One question often raised is, “Why did you send a fire engine when my mother was having breathing problems?”

First, let’s start with terminology. There are two types of medical aid calls: Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS). As the name implies, BLS incidents are of a lesser urgency than ALS. When the 9-1-1 dispatcher is taking information from the caller, an algorithmic chart is used to determine the correct apparatus to send.

In addition to EMS-related terminology, it is important to know the apparatus WPFR has and how they are staffed. An engine or ladder company always has a minimum of three personnel. All of them are trained to the level of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and some are certified at the more advanced level of paramedic. Engine and ladder companies carry a cardiac monitor/defibrillator, oxygen delivery equipment, basic bandaging and splinting supplies, and some medications such as epinephrine for anaphylactic shock. Two other apparatus that are imperative to EMS responses are ambulances and medic units. WPFR has multiple medic units that are staffed with WPFR firefighter/paramedics and are strategically located throughout the fire district. WPFR does not have any ambulances, but when one is needed, they are available and staffed by private companies with at least one paramedic.

For example, if a 9-1-1 call is determined to be BLS, the closest engine or ladder company and an ambulance will

be dispatched to respond. The engine company will arrive first and the company officer will take charge of the scene, assuring the safety of WPFR personnel and the people involved are the number one priority. The officer will then gather pertinent information regarding the patient while the other crew members assess the patient and render any treatment necessary. If the attending EMTs determine the patient’s condition requires BLS care, the ambulance will continue to the scene, where the patient is packaged and loaded into the ambulance for transport to an appropriate hospital. During the assessment of the patient, if it is determined the patient needs ALS treatment, the call will be upgraded and a medic unit will be dispatched to the scene.

For an ALS response, the closest engine or ladder company and the closest medic unit are dispatched. Medic units carry a wide array of medications and advanced medical equipment to address nearly any situation. It is not uncommon in the emergency medical profession to refer to medic units as “Mobile Intensive Care Units.” Some ALS calls are more complex, such as a cardiac arrest. 9-1-1 calls where CPR has been initiated (or has been determined to be needed) will need more personnel, which could mean two engines and one medic unit. These calls are very labor intensive and complex; having more “hands on deck” results in better outcomes for both the patients and first responders.

It is no secret there are many different scenarios first responders are faced with when it comes to 9-1-1 calls. Incident responses can certainly differ on a case-by-case basis, but rest assured that patient care, rapid response, and safety are of the utmost priority.

Thank you, West Pierce Employees

Over the past year, five members of West Pierce Fire & Rescue with 92 years of combined service and valuable experience have moved on to their next chapter. While it is difficult to see anyone leave the organization, as one of our core leadership priorities, WPFR strongly endorses succession. We encourage good leaders to share their knowledge and strive to develop others into future leaders. We know that each and every one was a leader, either by rank or experience in their craft, and the seeds of excellence were sown.

Congratulations and thank you, West Pierce employees, on a job well done!

WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE

3631 Drexler Drive West
University Place, WA 98466

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U.S. POSTAGE
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SEATTLE, WA
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ECRWSS

Welcome to West Pierce Fire & Rescue

This year, West Pierce Fire & Rescue welcomed 10 new firefighters, one Administrative Assistant, and one Commissioner to the family. Something those in the fire service have in common is the desire to serve their communities to the highest standards. New personnel bring fresh energy to the organization and have shown to be eager to learn as others pass on their trade to prepare them for the career ahead. We would like to welcome them and we look forward to seeing them serve our community!



Bruce Soland
Captain
1981 - 2018



Mitch Sagers
Fire Chief
1983 - 2018



Nadrece Robinson
Firefighter/Paramedic
2006 - 2018



Grant Erb
Commissioner
2010 - 2018



Andee Lugo
Administrative Assistant
2015 - 2018



Michael Cameron
Firefighter



Devanté Curry
Firefighter



Daniel Dillard
Firefighter



Antoine Drieu
Firefighter



Rae Ann Hastings
Firefighter



Michael Hawkins
Firefighter



Jared Johnson
Firefighter



Justin Sheldon
Firefighter



Tanner Wate
Firefighter



Solveig Waterfall
Firefighter



Shari Irish
Administrative Assistant



Dave Durr
Commissioner