

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

2016 is a milestone year for West Pierce Fire & Rescue, as March 1st marked our fifth anniversary. It's difficult to believe how quickly time has gone since the Lakewood and University Place Fire Departments merged to create West Pierce. We have been faced with many challenges and seen many changes. Below is just a brief summary of the last five years.

At the time of the merger in 2011, the economy was still reeling from the effects of the Great Recession. We spent the next couple of years downsizing and re-aligning our department. By the end of 2013, we had seen nearly 10 percent of our workforce retire. This was a significant amount of institutional knowledge leaving the department, but it allowed us the opportunity to evaluate the needs of the organization based on the new economy.

Although we lost several members during those early years, we didn't reduce any core services. In fact, we continued to improve upon them. In 2012, West Pierce entered into a contract to provide fire and emergency medical response services to the Town of Steilacoom. The following year, we made a significant change to our marine program. For the first time in over two decades we were able to place a fire and rescue boat back in Puget Sound with the commissioning of Fireboat Endeavor. This newest addition to our marine fleet was primarily grant funded, as was the necessary training and equipment.

By 2014, we had reached a point where we could no longer sustain reductions in the workforce. With more retirements scheduled, we hired our first group of new firefighters. Not only did these six represent the first firefighters hired by West Pierce, they were the first firefighters to be hired by either department in seven years. In the following years, other

departments began hiring again as well. Earlier this year, West Pierce held their first regional recruit academy in nearly a decade. In addition to our own firefighters, West Pierce instructors trained new recruits from Gig Harbor, Graham and South Pierce Fire & Rescue.

2015 was a very unique year for our organization. West Pierce was the host fire department for the U.S. Open, managing all fire and emergency medical response during the week-long event. This was the culmination of years of planning. In the end, all of our planning paid off and the event was a huge success for West Pierce, the community and the region.

One of the biggest challenges we have faced over the last five years is the ever increasing demand for service. Although we have reduced the size of our workforce, we continue to be challenged with a higher call volume year after year. In 2015, West Pierce responded to 15,477 calls for service. This represents a 21% increase from 2011. Already, in the first quarter of 2016, calls for service have increased by 14 percent, over the same time last year.

It has been a challenging, exciting and rewarding first five years. We realize our success is built around the support we receive from the community. We are excited about the future and look forward to building upon our strong community relationship during the next five years and beyond.

Jim Sharp, Fire Chief

## Know the laws regarding fireworks

Visit our website for more information  
[www.westpierce.org](http://www.westpierce.org)



Each city's ordinance differs slightly in terms of when residents may purchase and discharge fireworks. Please note the laws within your area.

### City of Lakewood

#### Fireworks may be purchased

June 28th from noon - 11 pm

June 29th to July 4th from 9 am - 11 pm

#### Fireworks may be discharged

July 3rd to July 5th from 11 am - 11 pm

### City of University Place

#### Fireworks may be purchased

June 28th from noon - 11 pm

June 29th to July 3rd from 9 am - 11 pm

July 4th from 9 am - 9 pm

#### Fireworks may be discharged

July 4th only from 9 am - midnight

The safest way to celebrate Independence Day is to visit a public fireworks display. The City of Tacoma and Town of Steilacoom both offer public displays.

For more information on fireworks safety and copies of the City of Lakewood and University Place's ordinances, please visit [www.westpierce.org](http://www.westpierce.org).

# Celebrate Safely this 4th of July



As the 4th of July approaches, celebrating safely is key. While this holiday is a fun way to spend a summer day, fireworks can cause various injuries and fire hazards. When using fireworks, please keep these tips in mind:

- Attend a public fireworks display
- Store fireworks out of reach of children
- Always keep water nearby
- Only use fireworks outdoors
- Do not throw fireworks or hold them in your hand
- Light one firework at a time and move away quickly
- Never relight a "dud"
- Soak used fireworks in water
- Be considerate and clean up used fireworks
- Keep matches and lighters away from children



# The Anatomy of a 9-1-1 Call

In the fire service, total response time is measured from the time a call is received by the dispatch center until the arrival of the first apparatus at the emergency scene. For the public, however, the clock for response time begins when an individual becomes aware of the emergency.

While the difference between these two approaches may vary by only a minute or so, for someone awaiting the arrival of help, the time can be agonizing. It's common to hear the question, "Why did it take so long for you to get here?"

West Pierce Fire & Rescue typically arrives at an emergency scene in less than ten minutes. There are various components to be considered when measuring these response times, as multiple factors come into play. West Pierce Fire & Rescue uses the following three components:

1) Call processing - This is the time it takes for the multi-agency dispatch center to receive and process a call in order to determine which agency to dispatch and what resources are needed. On average, this takes approximately 90 seconds. Several factors can affect call processing times: the level of excitement of the caller, the caller's familiarity with the location of the emergency, the type of call, the level of detail needed to accurately process the call and the adequacy of information provided by the caller.

2) Turnout time - This is the time it takes from the dispatcher notifying emergency crews of a 9-1-1 call until personnel are en route to the incident. This generally takes approximately 110 seconds for both fire and medical aid calls. There are several things that affect turnout time, such as time of day, location of the



firefighters whether in or out of the station, disengagement from tasks in progress, gathering critical response information, putting on gear, mounting the response unit, securing seat belts, starting the vehicle, opening bay doors, etc.

3) Travel time - This is the time from when the vehicle starts moving to the arrival at the emergency scene. West Pierce's performance standard for both fire and medical aid calls is six minutes. Travel time is the one variable crews have the least control over. Factors affecting travel time include the time of day, traffic congestion, weather conditions, type of roadway, distance from the station or whether or not units are on other calls.

The sum of these three segments is considered the total response time for a 9-1-1 call. West Pierce Fire & Rescue has established a total response time goal of nine minutes and 20 seconds, 90 percent of the time, from the time the call is received by the dispatch center. Regardless of the mitigating factors, crews always strive to respond to emergencies as fast as possible.







## Lake Addressing Program

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is ready to respond to emergencies on the water each and every day. This may include anything from people in distress to boat and structure fires on or near the water. One of the common problems encountered when responding to these types of emergencies is trying to get an accurate location and the closest access point to the incident.

Dispatchers often receive calls from a cell phone caller frantically trying to describe their location on the water by using landmarks they see nearby. Often times, the landmark will not allow the dispatcher to pinpoint their location. In this scenario, emergency responders are sent to a general location and attempt to locate the incident from there. This process takes valuable time and when there is an emergency, time is critical. In order to minimize response time, West Pierce Fire & Rescue has designed and implemented the Lake Addressing Program.

The Lake Addressing Program allows anyone, even non-resident boaters, to identify a location on the water or shoreline during an emergency by simply telling the 9-1-1 dispatcher the number located on the nearest dock or buoy. This allows for a fast and efficient emergency response to a known location, saving valuable time when it is needed most.

To be successful, the system requires a numbered sign be attached to each dock along the waterfront. For areas without docks, such as large, unimproved shorelines, numbered buoys may be used. The 9-1-1 dispatcher has the ability to cross-reference the dock or buoy number with a physical address



and give emergency crews the location immediately.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue has completed this program on Gravelly Lake, American Lake and Lake Steilacoom. The signs are approximately 8x6 inches and are brown with white reflective numbers. The buoys are white with black numbers and have been placed along the shoreline in shallow water at locations offering the best visibility.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue has provided the materials and labor for installation of these signs at no cost to the property owners. It is the goal of West Pierce Fire & Rescue to continue to reach those in need as quickly as possible.



# Red Knights Recruit Academy

If you drove along Steilacoom Boulevard earlier this year, near West Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 21, you may have seen a group in red t-shirts running on the nearby streets. These 17 recruit firefighters are evidence of exciting changes coming to West Pierce Fire & Rescue and neighboring fire departments. Four of those recruits now serve within West Pierce, while the others are from Gig Harbor, Graham and South Pierce Fire & Rescue. Over a 13 week period, instructors worked hard to shape and teach the next generation of firefighters to serve in the community.

This class was composed of 16 men and one woman who range in age from 22 to 51 years old. Each spent many hours learning on the drill ground, as well as studying firefighting techniques and hazardous materials response in the classroom. At the end of the academy, four state written exams and three practical exams were administered. Training on the drill ground, they learned hose and ladder handling, search and rescue, ventilation, auto extrication and many more skills used by firefighters on a daily basis. In the classroom, they studied basic fire behavior and hydrodynamics, all while practicing safety, company integrity and strong teamwork.

Recruits bring new energy to West Pierce Fire & Rescue and the community. They are eager to learn as senior firefighters pass on their trade to prepare them for the career ahead. Something all firefighters have in common is the desire to serve their communities with the highest standards. Due to the economic recession, many fire departments were not hiring and West Pierce Fire & Rescue had not hosted a regional recruit academy in nearly a decade.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue is proud to announce that on May 6th, 17 recruits graduated and are now the new faces serving the community. They will be working under senior officers and firefighters who continue the tradition of leaving the fire service better than they found it while passing on their skills to new recruits. Congratulations, Red Knights Class of 2016!



West Pierce Fire & Rescue is currently accepting registration for the upcoming Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class for those who live or work within the borders of West Pierce. Since its start in 2009, more than 500 citizens have been trained to prepare for and respond to disasters or extreme emergencies.

The class follows 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 themselves or 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 classes, students 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 classroom sessions are taught by West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel who are subject matter experts. The class begins on October 11th and are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for three weeks from 6 - 9 pm. It will culminate in a practical exercise on Saturday, October 29th 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.

**This class is 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](mailto:cert@westpierce.org).

# Retirements



**Jim Rotondo**  
Captain  
1975 - 2016



**Greg Johnson**  
Captain  
1981 - 2016



**Lloyd Christianson**  
Assistant Chief  
1983 - 2016



**Rick Jankowiak**  
Captain  
1992 - 2016



**Maria Lautt**  
Administrative Assistant  
2005 - 2015

## Thank You West Pierce Fire & Rescue Retirees

Five members of West Pierce Fire & Rescue turned the page to a new chapter in their life over the past year - retirement. Collectively, 143 years of combined service and valuable experience will be leaving the organization.

While it's difficult to see anyone in the organization decide to leave, 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!



## Free Smoke Alarm Program

The location of your smoke alarm matters, as well as the age of the alarm. That is the message behind this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Don't Wait. Check the Date!"

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 the home and ensuring they are less than 10 years old. Working smoke alarms save lives, as they decrease the chance of dying in a fire by half.

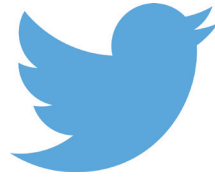
West Pierce Fire & Rescue is dedicated to helping save lives by offering FREE smoke alarm installations to residents within Lakewood and University Place. If you do not have smoke alarms in and outside each sleeping area, on every level, or if they are more than 10 years old, please call to schedule an appointment. Installations are completed by West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel. To schedule an appointment, please call 253.983.4583.



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



## Connect With Us



### First Aid & CPR Classes

Classes are held monthly from 9 am - 5 pm and cover adult, child and infant CPR, AED training, and basic first aid. The cost is \$40 and pre-registration is required.

#### Upcoming classes:

July 16, August 13, September 10, October 8, November 12 & December 10.



### Preschool/Day Care Visits

Two free fire safety curriculums are available for preschools and daycares to use in the classroom. 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. Please call for a copy of either curriculum to be sent to you.



### Blood Pressure Checks

Stop by any fire station to have your blood pressure checked. Please be advised when emergency crews are out of the station on 9-1-1 calls, there may not be anyone available to assist you. Thank you in advance for your patience.



### School Programs

Fire and life safety presentations are conducted at each of the elementary schools in the University Place and Clover Park School Districts. Fire safety is taught to Kindergarten and 2nd graders, child passenger safety to 1st graders, disaster preparedness to 3rd graders, bike and helmet safety to 4th graders, and basic first aid to 5th graders.



### Custom-Fit Helmet & Life Jacket Program

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

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



### Smoke Alarm Installations

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

Installations are completed by West Pierce Fire & Rescue personnel. To schedule an appointment, please call **253.983.4583**.



### Car Seat Checks

Did you know that 8 in 10 children are improperly restrained in vehicles? West Pierce Fire & Rescue would like to help you make sure your child is safe in the car.

If you are a resident of University Place or Lakewood, please call to schedule an appointment with a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician.



### 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.

# Upcoming Events

## Lakewood SummerFEST - July 9, 2016

Join us on Saturday, July 9th at Fort Steilacoom Park for SummerFEST 2016. Beginning at 11 am, public market vendors and food trucks will provide a variety of things to see, eat and buy. There will be tons of fun throughout the park for the entire family to enjoy! West Pierce Fire & Rescue will be on site to provide safety information, as well as have lots of fun activities for the family. Life jackets and bike helmets will be available for purchase (**cash only and wearer must be present for custom fit**). Make it an evening! Have dinner (food trucks available until 8 pm), then settle on your blankets for the outdoor movie "Minions" on the big screen. Check out the entire schedule of events at [www.cityoflakewood.us](http://www.cityoflakewood.us).

## Safe Sitter Babysitting Class - July 12-14, 2016

The Safe Sitter babysitting class is designed to teach students ages 11-13 how to be safe when caring for a child. Students will learn how to conduct babysitting as a business, childcare skills, CPR and choking rescue, as well as basic first aid. This three-day class runs from 8:30 am - 12:30 pm each day and costs \$40. Space is limited and registration closes July 7th. For more information or a copy of the registration form, please visit our website at [www.westpiercer.org](http://www.westpiercer.org).

## National Night Out Against Crime - August 2, 2016

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 the evening of Tuesday, August 2nd. Fire and police department personnel attend block parties throughout the communities to visit with citizens and offer various safety information. If you are interested in hosting a block party, please contact the Lakewood Police Department at 253.830.5054 or the University Place Police Department at 253.798.3141 to register.

## CERT Class - October 11-29, 2016

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training will be held at West Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 21, located at 5000 Steilacoom Boulevard SW in Lakewood. This class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 - 9 pm each night. October 29th will be a culminating exercise so participants can practice what they have learned. Participants will be taught how to respond in a disaster situation, fire suppression, search

### WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE

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## ECRWSS Postal Customer



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@westpiercer.org](mailto:cert@westpiercer.org).

## Fall Safety Day - October 22, 2016

West Pierce Fire & Rescue's annual Fall Safety Day will be held on October 22nd from 10 am - 1 pm at West Pierce Fire & Rescue Station 21, located at 5000 Steilacoom Boulevard SW in Lakewood. There will be various activities for families, including custom helmet fitting (**cash only and rider must be present for a custom fit**), a car seat check, safety games, information booths, digital photos for kids in costume and of course, pumpkins! Bring the family out for a day of fun! For more information, please contact 253.564.1623.