



ENUMCLAW FIRE DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Call Volumes Continue to Rise for Enumclaw Fire Department

More Calls and Simultaneous Calls Highlight Need for Additional Staffing

ENUMCLAW, WASH. – The Enumclaw Fire Department reports that emergency call volumes are on the rise. The fire district reports that emergencies have increased almost 13% from January through August of 2021 compared to the same time last year.

Simultaneous calls – those that come in at the same time or overlap with other emergencies – are also increasing. In 2020, simultaneous calls accounted for 18.3% of the fire district’s total call volume. So far this year, multiple calls are 20.4% of total call volumes.

What’s driving the higher number and overlapping calls? Growth, says Fire Chief Randy Fehr. The Enumclaw community has grown 22.5% since 2011.

“Our community is growing, and our emergency call volumes reflect this fact,” said Chief Randy Fehr. “We are at the point where we need to bring on more firefighters to maintain response times and service levels.”

Daily operations at the Enumclaw Fire Department are funded by a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Over time, the fire levy rate falls as property values rise to limit the fire district to roughly the same amount of levy revenue per year.

For example, voters last approved a fire levy of \$1.50/\$1,000 in 2016, and that amount is projected to fall to \$1.38/\$1,000 in 2022. New homes do not mean additional property tax revenue. Instead, the total amount of revenue from the fire levy is shared by all properties, which lowers the fire levy rate overall.

The fire district is considering asking the community to maintain the fire levy at \$1.50/\$1,000 during an election sometime in 2022. Revenue would be used to increase staffing from four to five firefighters per shift.

“This is becoming a safety issue for both the public and our firefighters,” said Chief Fehr. “We need to have this conversation with our community.”

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The Enumclaw Fire Department provides fire and life safety services to 22,500 people over 56 square miles. EFD relies on full-time and volunteer emergency personnel to respond to an average of 2,500 calls a year, 74% of which are for emergency medical service. Firefighters are highly-trained to provide quality emergency services often found in larger communities, such as technical rescue, hazardous material spills, auto extrication, fire prevention and life safety programs.