



ENUMCLAW FIRE DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Calls for Emergency Medical Aid Spike in First Half of 2022

Fire levy lid lift will fund additional firefighters to meet growing community service needs

ENUMCLAW, WASH. – Emergency medical aid calls are up significantly – 13.4 percent in the first half of 2022 compared to the same time last year for the Enumclaw Fire Department. The fire department funds medical aid calls through its fire levy. The fire levy lid lift on the August 2, 2022, Primary Election ballot would fund additional firefighters to improve response times and outcomes for patients during a medical emergency.

Overall call volumes continue to increase and are up 5.6 percent in the first half of 2022 compared to this time last year. Of those calls, medical aid calls – which have spiked 13.4 percent – account for a significant amount of the overall increase. In addition to higher call volumes, emergency calls that overlap (come in at the same time) account for 16.7 percent of all calls.

The Enumclaw Fire Department uses the fire levy to fund both its fire suppression and Basic Life Support emergency medical service program. Current staffing levels are not enough to keep up with this increase in call volumes without firefighters having to work overtime, which costs taxpayers more.

By the numbers: Call volumes trending up

- Call volumes are up 5.6 percent in the first half of 2022 compared to the same time last year; during this same period medical aid calls have spiked 13.4 percent
- Emergency medical aid calls account for 79.6 percent of all calls
- In 2021 call volumes increased 12.6 percent compared to 2020 (almost 40 percent compared to 10 years ago)
- Emergency calls that came in at the same time accounted for almost 20 percent of all 911 calls in 2021

“We must be transparent to our community about operations. Our people are tired, we are struggling and response times are starting to increase,” Fire Chief Randy Fehr said. “Overtime is not financially sustainable for taxpayers, nor is it sustainable from a safety perspective for our community and our firefighters.”

The department is asking for a 14-cent fire levy lid lift to return the levy from \$1.36 to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed home value to hire three additional firefighters, who are also qualified emergency medical technicians. This would keep both a medical aid unit and a fire engine in service 24 hours a day. Right now, a fire engine must be taken out of service when overlapping calls for emergency service come in at the same time.

The 14-cent lid lift would cost \$5.83 per month or \$70 per year for an owner of a \$500,000 home (considered the average for this area). The measure is on the August 2 Primary Election ballot, which were mailed to voters on July 13. Ballots must be postmarked by August 2 or dropped in a ballot box by 8 p.m. that night to count in the election.

For more information on the fire levy lid lift, visit the department’s website at www.enumclawfire.org. Chief Fehr also welcomes your questions at 360-825-5544 or rfehr@enumclawfire.org.

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.

