Prsrt Std
U.S. Postage
PAID
Kent, WA
Permit No. 71

ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON

EMERGENCY RESPONDER

A PUGET SOUND REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY PUBLICATION | **SPRING 2025**

BUILDING SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

BRIAN CARSON
Fire Chief

From Fire Chief Brian Carson

Time moves quickly, and I find myself reflecting with gratitude as I enter my third year as your Fire Chief. It is both an honor and a privilege to serve in this role, but more than anything, I am deeply thankful for the unwavering support of the communities we serve. Your trust and partnership mean everything to us; thank you!

At Puget Sound Fire, our top priority is serving you with professionalism and compassion when you need us the most. Our commitment goes beyond emergency response—we take great pride in building strong relationships with those that work and live within the communities we serve. I encourage you to visit your local fire station, attend community events, and connect with our teams. Your involvement strengthens our partnership and helps us serve you even better.

As part of our commitment to you, we continually seek ways to enhance our services and community outreach. If you have questions, ideas, or simply want to learn more about what we do, we'd love to hear from you. Consider joining a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class, CPR training, or even volunteering with our Citizen's Advisory Committee. Your voice matters, and your participation makes a difference.

> ***Puget Sound Fire remains dedicated to adapting and innovating so that we may better serve you.***

Lastly, Puget Sound Fire remains dedicated to adapting and innovating so that we may better serve you. Our greatest strength is our people—the nearly 500 dedicated professionals who make up Puget Sound Fire. From firefighters, fire officers, nurses, and social workers to the behind-the-scenes teams in the fire garage, finance, and information technology, (to name just a few), every member plays a vital role in supporting our mission. Their dedication and professionalism inspire me daily, and I cannot thank them enough.

Together, we continue to grow, improve, and serve. Thank you for being part of this journey with us. ■

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

FD CARES Program Update 2
New Fire Apparatus 2
New Firefighters 2
Message from the Governance Board 3
Our Guiding Principles 3
Lithium-ion Battery Safety 4
Kids Activity 4
Spring Into Safety: Home Safety Tips 5
Evacuation Planning at Home 5
Significant Calls/Events 6
Strike Teams Deploy to CA Wildfires 6
Wildland Urban Interface Town Hall 7
2024 Holiday Program Results 7
Tips for Apartments and Senior Housing ... 8

FD CARES PROGRAM UPDATE

By Captain Paul Zydek

The Fire Department Community Assistance, Referrals and Education Services program, referred to as FD CARES, is a fire agency-based community injury and illness prevention program. It is a Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program at Puget Sound Fire aimed at addressing non-emergency calls by deploying a team consisting of a nurse and a social worker. This team focuses on situations that do not require a full emergency medical response, such as mental health crisis, welfare checks, chronic Illness management, and social service needs.

By providing on-site medical assessments, connecting individuals to appropriate resources, and reducing unnecessary hospital visits, FD CARES enhances community well-being while allowing traditional emergency responders to focus on critical, life-threatening incidents. Puget Sound Fire FD CARES provides the services within the Puget Sound Fire service area as well as additional surrounding jurisdictions. Through contracts, FD CARES provides community services for the Renton Regional Fire Authority, Renton Police Department, Kent Police Department, Enumclaw Fire Department, and King County Fire District #20.

Growth and Program Improvements

During the first quarter of 2025, the FD CARES team turned its focus inward, making structural improvements to enhance its already successful program. A key change involved transitioning the lead nurse and lead social worker to a regular day shift at the CARES administrative offices located at Station 52, in Tukwila. Structural changes can often be a catalyst for growth and innovation, and the recent adjustments to FD CARES are no exception. On January 1, 2025, the lead nurse and lead social worker officially began their new schedules, and the positive impact has been evident.

The shift to an administrative role has already proven beneficial, enhancing support for both field crews and office staff, all while maintaining a high level of service to the community.

Looking Ahead: Expansion and Training

In March, our FD CARES added a new nurse and social worker, bringing the team total to nine nurses and nine social workers.

The timing of these new hires aligns seamlessly with the recent leadership changes. The lead nurse and lead social worker will play pivotal roles in training our new staff. The onboarding process includes a rigorous four-week program of training, classes and ride-alongs with field crews to ensure new team members meet the highest standards of care expected at Puget Sound Fire. These structural adjustments are designed to set the stage for continued success and to support the team's goal of providing unparalleled care to the community.

The FD CARES team's dedication and commitment to adapt and enhance its structure demonstrates a clear focus on serving the community with excellence. By continuously refining the program and supporting team members, we are setting the stage to better meet the needs of the community we serve. ■

NEW FIRE APPARATUS COMING…

By Deputy Chief Mark Jones

Puget Sound Fire has ordered three new Pierce Enforcer fire engines to replace three aging front-line fire engines in our fleet. The new engines will be assigned at Station 53 in Tukwila, Station 73 on the west hill of Kent, and Station 76 in Kent. The engines that are being replaced are at least 10 years old. These engines will move to reserve status, and will allow us to surplus some reserve engines that are 25 years old.

Our standard is to have an engine serve as a front-line engine for 10 years and then designate it as a reserve engine for an additional five years. Reserve engines are placed in service when a front-line engine goes in for preventative maintenance and repairs. These three new fire engines will be similar to the five that we accepted delivery of approximately one year ago. The new engines will have better exterior lighting, interior and compartment lighting to save firefighter's night vision, and enhanced scene lighting for firefighter safety. These engines also have a better suspension that provides a better turning radius. Each engine cost approximately $890,000.00 (including Washington State sales tax) and was funded by our capital replacement fund. Our capital replacement fund identifies apparatus, staff vehicles, and equipment lifespans and replacement cycles and is projected out for 20 years. By purchasing three engines at once, we were able to spread the cost of the engineering out to the three engines, thus lowering the cost.

Since a number of our reserve fire engines are well past the 15-year lifespan, we also purchased one stock fire engine. When it arrives and complete the acceptance testing and inspection, it will be placed in-service as a reserve engine. This will ensure we have a reliable reserve engine for the next 15 years.

We have completed the pre-construction review of the specifications and drawings and plan on taking delivery of the three new fire engines by the end of 2025. Thank you for your continued support and look for these new engines in your neighborhood early next year! ■

PUGET SOUND FIRE NEW FIREFIGHTERS

We are proud to welcome the following members to the Puget Sound Fire family. These individuals proved their dedication throughout their fire academy training, and we are excited about the depth of service and professionalism they will bring to our communities.

RECRUIT CLASS 19

Alfred Chen
Alyssa Jones
Austin Knight
Brandon Oliver
Chad McCann
Connor Barison
Daniel Kulikowski
David Dunlap
Derek Robinson
Faasafua Sula
Hunter White
Liam Tait
Lorin Cox
Nathan Giboney
Staci Weaver
Temesgen Zegergis

A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNANCE BOARD

By Toni Troutner, Governance Board Chairperson

TONI TROUTNER
Governance Board Chairperson

Your Puget Sound Fire Governance Board is very proud of the work that your firefighters have done over the last six months. They responded to hundreds of calls during the bomb cyclone (some requiring complex rescues), technical rescue calls in the Green River Gorge, and multi-alarm structure fires. Even with all these emergency incidents, we see the firefighters out in the community, at trick or treat events, tree lighting events, and holiday events. We strive to provide your firefighters with the best training and equipment so they can do their jobs safely and effectively.

We are very proud of the fact that your fire department in one of the best in the state and in the nation. All members of the fire department, both the uniform firefighters, and the non-uniform staff members constantly look for ways and opportunities to improve service to you. This includes members of our Community Relations, Public Education, Fire Prevention, Fire Investigations, FD CARES, and Emergency Management divisions.

Just as your firefighters strive to serve all of you professionally and compassionately, your RFA Governance Board members strive to do the same, while being fiscally responsible. We are committed to serving our diverse communities and citizens with integrity and compassion.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you! ■

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Puget Sound Fire's Mission, Vision, and Values

By Deputy Chief Norm Golden

Puget Sound Fire has a set of Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV) statements for the organization that are the foundational elements defining who Puget Sound Fire is, what the organization stands for, and where it is headed. Between June and October of 2024, 31 Puget Sound Fire committee members selected from all areas of the organization completed a series of five workshops over the course of several weeks to update our MVV statements.

The previous MVV statements were established before the mergers with King County Fire District #43 and the City of Tukwila Fire Department, and it was time to re-evaluate the statements and make updates so that everyone across the organization believes in, supports, and utilizes them as a 'north star' when making decisions. The following are the updated Mission, Vision, and Values statements for Puget Sound Fire:

Our Mission

"Professionally and compassionately helping people."

Professionalism involves adhering to a set of standards and principles that demonstrate competence, responsibility, respect, and ethical behavior. It is about maintaining a high standard of conduct that upholds the values and goals of Puget Sound Fire. "Compassionately helping people" involves offering support, understanding, and care to others in a way that is empathetic, kind, and genuine.

Our Vision

"Cultivating an environment of excellence, respect, and fun."

Cultivating excellence is not a one-time achievement but an ongoing journey of self-improvement and dedication to maintaining the highest levels of quality and performance in all areas of Puget Sound Fire.

Cultivating respect creates an atmosphere where individuals feel valued, heard, and understood, which in turn promotes collaboration, trust, and positive relationships in both personal and professional environments.

Cultivating fun refers to the deliberate effort to create and nurture an environment or atmosphere where enjoyment, creativity, and positive energy thrive. It involves encouraging activities, interactions, and attitudes that bring joy, laughter, and a sense of lightheartedness while maintaining balance and productivity.

Our Core Values

Serve with integrity – This means carrying out duties, responsibilities, and actions with honesty, ethical principles, and a strong sense of moral character. It involves doing what is right, even when no one is watching, and consistently adhering to values such as fairness, transparency, and accountability.

Lead by example – This means demonstrating the behaviors, values, and standards you expect from others through your own actions, rather than just through words or instructions. It involves setting a positive example and serving as a role model for others to follow.

Be resilient – This means having the ability to recover from setbacks, adapt to difficult situations, and keep going despite challenges or adversity. It involves mental toughness, emotional strength, and perseverance in the face of hardship.

Taking care of each other – means offering support, kindness, and consideration to those around us, ensuring their well-being and helping them through challenges. It involves fostering a sense of community, empathy, and mutual respect, where individuals look out for one another's physical, emotional, and mental needs.

A Renewed Focus

By developing renewed and updated mission, vision, and values statements, we have also renewed our commitment to getting the best performance from our members and delivering the best possible service to our communities. ■

LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY

By Carly Mills, Public Educator

What do cellular phones, e-bikes, and power tools all have in common? They each contain the ever-so present lithium-ion battery. As technology evolves, manufacturers are finding new and efficient ways to charge household items with lithium-ion batteries. Lithium-ion batteries are small but mighty rechargeable batteries that store a lot of energy within a compact space. While these batteries are a great benefit to consumers, they are also a fire hazard if not handled correctly. With this in mind, Puget Sound Fire encourages everyone to know the solutions to decrease fires caused by batteries and charge safely.

When lithium-ion batteries are stored or used incorrectly, overcharged, or damaged in any way, they can quickly explode or catch fire. Situations where damage can occur include when a battery is crushed or exposed to water; overcharged or charged using equipment that was not made for the battery; or left in a place of extreme temperature. When under these conditions, lithium-ion batteries can enter an uncontrollable self-heating state called thermal runaway, which is the chain reaction caused by battery cells failing, overheating, and spreading to other cells.

It is important to know how to look for these signs when charging devices in your home. A damaged battery will show signs of excessive heat, swelling, popping sounds, a change in color, and unusual odors. If any of your devices show any of these signs of damage, stop using the device and contact your local recycling programs or household hazardous waste collection points to properly dispose of the device.

If you have a damaged device in your home, do not place it in your household garbage or recycling bin as the battery could reheat and catch fire either in your bin, during transport, or at the landfill or recycling center. It is best to take them to collection points where the batteries will be handled and disposed of appropriately.

To charge safely and avoid the potential dangers of lithium-ion batteries, always be sure to:

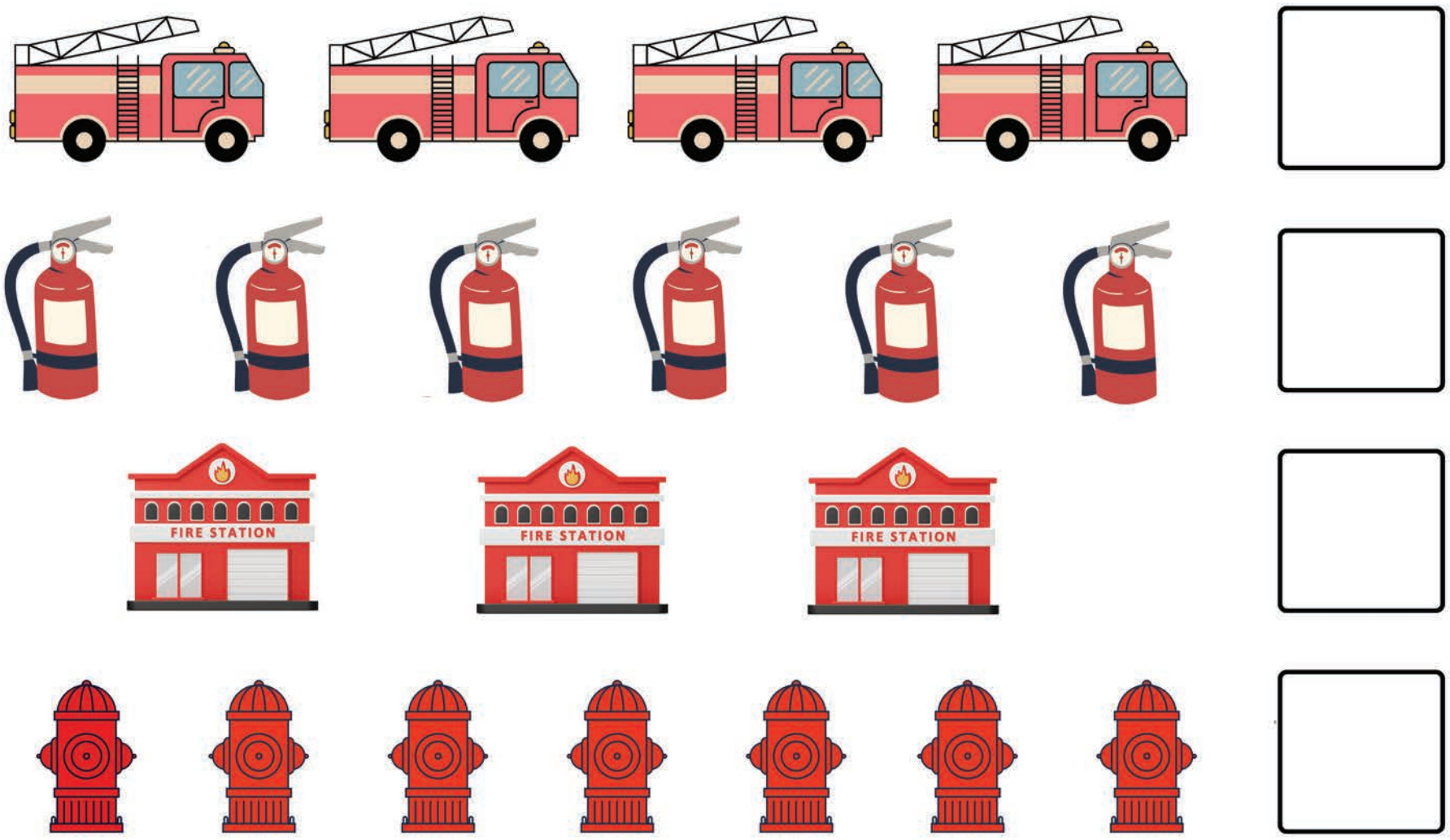
- Purchase batteries that are made for the specific devices and are listed and tested by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Only use compatible equipment to charge or replace parts of the device, such as the cord provided with the device or a battery from the manufacturer/retailer it was purchased.
- Stop charging the device or battery once it is fully charged.
- Stop using the device or battery if it shows signs of damage.
- Have repairs done by a qualified professional.
- Always follow the manufacturer instructions.

In addition to these safety tips, if you own an E-bike, electric scooter, or electric vehicle, find a place to safely charge it outside, away from your home, and not in direct sunlight. Lithium-ion batteries are very sensitive to heat and need little oxygen to grow. To best ensure yourself a safe exit if you are in danger of a fire, store your battery in a space that will not block your exit from the area. By knowing the risks and having solutions for how to avoid them, it will continue to keep our communities safer places to be. ■

Source: National Fire Protection Association.

KIDS' ACTIVITY: *Count the fire department items and write the number in the box*!

By Bre Boyce, Public Educator



SPRING INTO SAFETY

By Captain Cathy Browning

Spring is a great opportunity to refresh your home and ensure it's safe and ready for the warmer months ahead. Grab your pens and spring into safety by completing this checklist of essential action items and safety tips to help keep your home and family safe this season.

INDOORS

Smoke & Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms

- ☐ Test all alarms in your home to ensure they're functioning properly. Replace batteries if needed and make sure alarms are less than 10 years old.
- ☐ Have a smoke alarm on every level of the home and inside bedrooms.

Electrical Safety

- ☐ Use only one heat-producing appliance (coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time.
- ☐ Plug major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves, etc.) directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extensions cords and plug strips should not be used.
- ☐ Check home electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Inspect electrical cords to make sure they are not damaged and ensure items plugged in are not loose in the wall receptacles.

Clothes Dryers

- ☐ Use and clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry.
- ☐ Check that the air exhaust vent pipe is not restricted, and that the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating.
- ☐ Place clothes that have come in contact with flammable substances like gasoline, paint thinner, or similar solvents outside to dry completely, then wash and dry as usual.

OUTDOORS

Grills / BBQs

- ☐ Inspect a grill carefully and make sure it's free of grease or fat build up. Clean out any nests, spider webs, or other debris you may find.
- ☐ Check propane tanks for leaks especially before using it for the first time each year.
- ☐ Place grills away from home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- ☐ Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources. When finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

Other Outside Items

- ☐ Clear away yard debris: Leaves, branches, and dry vegetation can become fire hazards. Regularly clean your yard to reduce fire risk.
- ☐ Properly store flammable materials: Keep gas, oil, and other flammables in approved containers and store them in well-ventilated areas away from heat sources.

Preparation is much easier than remediation and recovery. These spring maintenance safety tips are a great place to start preparing your home for brighter days ahead! ■

EVACUATION PLANNING AT HOME

By Don Maher, Public Educator

Fire and evacuation drills are performed monthly at schools and businesses. They are mandated by law and help prepare our community in case of an emergency. However, families rarely prepare and practice for emergencies in their own homes. It's easy to become complacent in your own home and think "it could never happen to me", but having a plan in place can make a big difference. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, in 2023, there were 344,600 residential fires, 2,890 deaths, and 10,400 fire-related injuries.

The following are simple steps you and your family can take now to prepare and practice in your own home.

Plan for everyone. Consider the unique needs of every person in your household, including young children and elderly family members who may have limited mobility. Children don't always wake when a smoke alarm sounds, so assign someone to help them and choose a backup person in case the assigned person is unavailable if you must evacuate your home.

Find two ways out. Visit each room of your house and identify two ways out, including windows and doors. Make sure all escape routes open easily so you can get outside.

Involve children in planning. Consider having your children help create a fire evacuation plan. Draw a map of the interior layout of your home and have the children mark two exit routes and the locations of smoke alarms.

Choose a meeting spot. Decide on a meeting place outside, such as a mailbox, telephone pole, or tree. The meeting spot should be located in front of the house that emergency responders can see you when they arrive.

Check the smoke alarms. Check that smoke alarms are properly placed and working. The National Fire Protection Association recommends installing an alarm in every bedroom room, outside each bedroom and on every level of the home.

Be visible. Make sure that your house address numbers can be seen quickly from the street.

Respond quickly. Make sure everyone knows that if the smoke alarm sounds, they need to get out immediately.

Shelter in place. If the planned exit routes are blocked and it's not possible to leave the house, close all doors between you and the fire. Place a towel under the door and go to an exterior-facing window. Call 911 to report your location.

Share with everyone. Go over the plan with everyone who lives in the house and with visitors and overnight guests.

Practice regularly. Practice and review your evacuation plan at least twice per year.

With a smart and well-thought-out evacuation plan in place, you can be one step ahead of the unexpected when you may not have the time or ability to think things through. For more information on evacuation planning for your home visit nfpa.org or ready.gov. ■

SIGNIFICANT CALLS/EVENTS

By Division Chief Pat Pawlak

Fire, EMS, hazardous materials (HAZMAT), and specialty rescue responses make up the foundation of what Puget Sound Fire does. In 2024, we responded to: 31,680 EMS; 2,723 fire; 757 HAZMAT; 308 specialty rescue; and 12,347 fire alarm, service, and storm related incidents.

The following are two significant calls/events from 2024:

Thursday, May 2, 2024 – At approximately 5:00 pm, Puget Sound Fire responded to a reported fire at a self-storage complex in Kent. Callers to 9-1-1 reported seeing dark smoke and hearing sounds of explosions. There were also reports of a person suffering from third degree burns. While en-route, Engine 376 saw a large thermal column, upgraded the incident to a working fire, and added an additional King County Medic One unit for the patient. The working fire upgrade added a second ladder company, a King County Medic One Medical Services Officer (MSO), a paramedic unit, Zone 3 Fire Cadets to assist with firefighter rehab, a Public Information Officer (PIO), a fire investigator, and representatives from the electrical and natural gas utility providers.

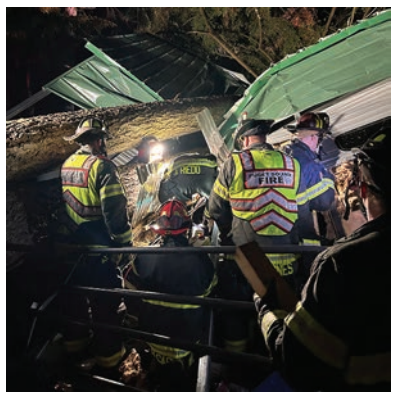
When Engine 376 arrived, the crew found the east end of a storage unit building well involved with fire. At least eight units were involved, and a second alarm was dispatched. Large-diameter hose lines were deployed to both the north and south sides of the building, and forcible entry techniques were used to gain access to the units on fire. Vertical ventilation along with a strip cut was performed to stop the horizontal spread of fire. Aerial master streams were also used to slow the progression of fire.

The management of the fire was divided to maintain span of control for the incident commander. The incident commander established Charlie Division, a medical group supervisor, and a staging area manager. A third alarm was requested to provide resources throughout the incident. The fire was confined to the eastern third of the building. One person was treated and transported for burns to an area hospital. Puget Sound Fire was assisted by units from Renton Regional Fire Authority, and King County Medic One.

Tuesday, November 19, 2024 – The region was hit by a bomb cyclone weather event, which brought significant winds to the area. The high winds caused fallen trees, downed power lines, and widespread power outages. During this event, several responses occurred due to trees falling onto homes and travel trailers, residential fires, and carbon monoxide related incidents. In the 12-hour period, beginning at 3:00 pm on Tuesday, November 19 through 3:00 am on Wednesday, November 20, Puget Sound Fire firefighters responded to 308 calls for assistance. Of these responses, 245 were for storm related issues. The busiest hour was between 8:00 pm and 9:00 pm when firefighters responded to 63 calls for assistance, and within the three-hour time frame between 7:00-10:00 pm, firefighters responded to 154 calls for assistance. ■

5/2/24

11/19/24



STRIKE TEAMS DEPLOY TO CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

By Captain Sean Allen

On January 9, two engine companies from Puget Sound Fire, along with engine companies from Seattle Fire, South King Fire & Rescue, and Valley Regional Fire Authority, and a strike team leader from Eastside Fire & Rescue departed for Southern California to assist with fighting the devastating wildfires. Their deployment lasted 17 days. When firefighters arrived on the evening of January 10, they were immediately put to work on the fire lines. Firefighters said that their first few shifts lasted 30 plus hours, and they were tasked with protecting neighborhoods from the approaching fire, extinguishing hotspots, and protecting structures. While working on the fire lines, your Puget Sound Fire firefighters gained valuable experience that will be put to good use in training our firefighters for fire responses here in Washington state.

We would like to thank our firefighters as well as all the firefighters from the state of Washington who also deployed to California. ■

WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE TOWN HALL – MAY 14

By Division Chief Pat Pawlak

As the likelihood of fast-moving wildfires has increased with housing developments pushing further into forested areas, Puget Sound Fire encourages all residents to be prepared. Please join is for a Wildland Urban Interface Town Hall **Wednesday, May 14** from 6:00-7:30 pm at Lake Wilderness Lodge, in the City of Maple Valley. Fire Chief Brain Carson of Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority, and elected officials from the Cities of Covington and Maple Valley will be on hand for this event.

What is a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)? A WUI is an area where homes and other structures meet or intermingle with wildland vegetation that is at a higher risk of wildfires and the potential for fire to spread rapidly.

Topics to Be Covered at the Town Hall

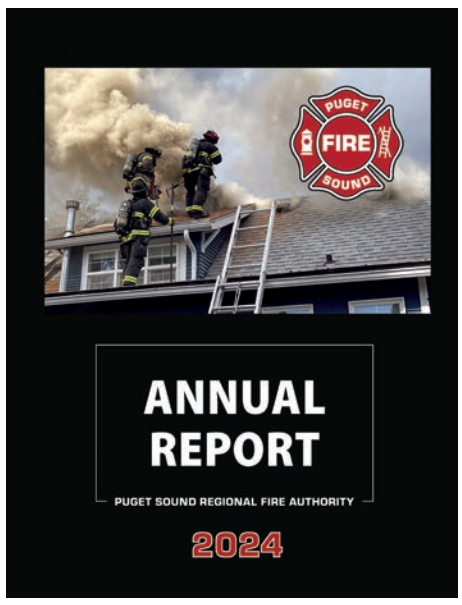
- **Wildfire risk assessment** – Specific wildfire risks in the area, including factors like vegetation type, climate, and historical fire activity.
- **Mitigation strategies** – *Defensible space:* Creating a buffer zone around homes by removing flammable vegetation and maintaining a clear area. *Fire-resistant construction:* Using materials that are resistant to ignition and ember damage. *Community Wildfire Protection Plans:* Local plans that identify WUIs and target resources towards wildfire response, community preparedness, and specific risk-reduction activities.
- **Community preparedness** – *Evacuation planning:* Information on evacuation routes, shelters, an what to do in case of a wildfire. *Fire safety tips:* Advice on home preparation, such as having a fire-resistant roof and keeping gutters clear. *Local resources:* Information on local fire departments, emergency services, and other resources available to residents.
- **Local regulations:** *Building codes:* Information on WUI-specific building codes and regulations. *Landscaping ordinances:* Guidelines on landscaping to reduce wildfire risk.
- **Q&A:** An opportunity for residents to ask questions and receive answers from local experts.

Why Attend?

- **Stay informed** – Learn about the specific wildfire risks in your area and what you can do to protect yourself and your property.
- **Get involved** – Participate in community efforts to reduce wildfire risk and improve preparedness.
- **Ask questions** – Get your questions answered by local experts.
- **Protect your home and community** – Take proactive steps to ensure the safety of your home and community during the wildfire season.

If you have any questions regarding this event, please contact Division Chief Pat Pawlak at (253) 856-4405. We hope to see you there! ■

ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE



Download your copy at pugetsoundfire.org/resources/reports

2024 HOLIDAY PROGRAM RESULTS

Thank you to our generous communities for their support!

In 2024, Toys for Joy collected approximately 6,000 toys/stocking stuffers, 30 bicycles/scooters, and 36 resource/gift baskets for children and families in need. The Holiday Engine collected more than $20,000 in monetary donations to local food banks and more than 27,000 pounds of food.

COME SEE US AT A COMMUNITY EVENT THIS SUMMER!

Kent International Festival
May 31

Maple Valley Days
June 13-15

Maple Valley Bike Challenge and Bike Safety Rodeo
June 21

SeaTac Bike Rodeo
June 28

Cornucopia Days
July 11-13

Covington Days Festival
July 19-20

Maple Valley Kids' Festival
July 19

Covington KidsFest
August 9

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR APARTMENTS & SENIOR HOUSING

By Jennifer Keizer, Emergency Management Coordinator

Being prepared for emergencies is the best way to protect your household. For residents of apartments and senior housing, preparedness can be challenging due to the unique living situations. However, with the right plan in place, you can stay safe and respond effectively to a wide range of emergencies.

Know Your Environment and Building

- **Building exits and stairwells:** Know the exits in your building. Identify the locations of fire escapes, stairwells, and emergency exits.
- **Fire safety systems:** Know the locations of fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, and fire alarms. Understand how fire sprinkler systems work.
- **Emergency lighting:** Find out if the building has emergency lighting in case of power outages, particularly in hallways/stairwells.
- **Stock Emergency Supplies:** Stock non-perishable food, water, medications, blankets, flashlights, batteries, and battery-powered radio.

Create an Emergency Plan

- **Establish a communication network:** Have a communication system with neighbors, family, and friends. It may be helpful to ask someone to regularly check in on you.
- **Evacuations:** Many apartments and senior housing have set evacuation meeting spots. If you have physical limitations, speak to your building management to ensure that you'll have help if needed. Know two escape routes.
- **Pets or service animals:** Include your pets or service animals in your emergency plan. Have a pet emergency kit and identify pet-friendly shelters or evacuation routes.

Prepare an Emergency Kit

- **Water and non-perishable food:** Store enough water and food for at least three days, up to a week if possible. Non-perishable foods like protein bars, canned goods and/or dehydrated foods are all great options.
- **Medications:** Keep a supply of necessary medications in a waterproof, easily accessible container. Having a printout of all medications and dosages along with doctors' names available is also great to have.
- **First-aid kit:** Include bandages, antiseptics, gloves, and other needed first-aid supplies.
- **Flashlights and batteries:** Have flashlights on hand for power outages. Consider battery-operated lanterns. Store batteries separately.
- **Backup power sources:** Keep a phone charger or a fully charged power bank in your kit.
- **Important documents:** Keep copies of documents (ID, insurance, medical records, legal papers, etc.) in a waterproof container.
- **Special needs:** If you have assistive devices (ie. walkers, wheelchairs, or hearing aids), keep them in good working order and easily accessible. Stock items that are essential to your family's individual needs.

Stay Informed

- **Receive alerts:** Stay informed about hazards or evacuations. Puget Sound Fire uses *Alert King County* for emergency notifications and alerts. Register all phones and emails to receive these notifications. Sign up at kingcounty.gov/alert.
- **Monitor the news:** Follow weather forecasts for natural disasters like snowstorms, windstorms, or floods. Radio stations or apps can also provide up-to-date information.
- **Understand response protocols:** Know your building's emergency response plan. Many complexes conduct drills or have materials explaining what to do in different types of emergencies. Attend drills or safety meetings.
- **Training:** Sign up for a Community Emergency Response Team training at https://bit.ly/CERT_PSF. This free 8-week course includes preparedness, fire safety, disaster medical and disaster psychology.

Prepare for Medical Emergencies

- **Medical ID:** If you have a medical condition such as diabetes, heart disease, or allergies, consider wearing a medical alert bracelet. This helps respond quickly to your unique needs.
- **Contacts:** Keep a list of emergency contacts, including doctors and caregivers, in an easily accessible place. Share this list with neighbors or building management.
- **Health Equipment:** If you rely on medical equipment, such as a portable oxygen tank or CPAP machine, have backups that can be used in an emergency. Keep a supply of necessary accessories for your equipment and know how to store them safely.

Fire Safety

- **Smoke alarms:** Test smoke alarms at least once a month to ensure they are functioning. Change the batteries as needed.
- **Fire escape plan:** Practice evacuating with family members or neighbors, so everyone knows how to exit quickly and safely.
- **Stop, drop, and roll:** Familiarize yourself with fire safety techniques, like "stop, drop, and roll" for extinguishing flames on your clothing.

Plan for Power Outages

- **Backup power:** If you need electricity for critical devices, like oxygen machines, consider investing in a generator or back-up battery system.
- **Alternative lighting:** Have a reliable source of light, like battery-operated lanterns or flashlights. Candles pose a fire hazard and should be avoided.

Regularly Review and Practice Your Plan

Emergency preparedness is an ongoing process. Review and practice your emergency plan at least once a year. Conduct fire drills, update your emergency kit, and refresh your knowledge of evacuation routes. Encourage neighbors, particularly those in senior housing, to do the same, and create a community of support.

Emergency preparedness in apartments or senior housing requires careful planning, awareness, and practice. By understanding the above strategies, you and your loved ones will be ready for any emergency situation. ■

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY

INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED FIRE AGENCY

FIRE HEADQUARTERS / ADMINISTRATION
20811 84th Avenue South
Kent, WA 98032
(253) 856-4300

Emergency	9-1-1
Emergency Management	(253) 856-4440
Public Information Officer	(253) 856-4405
Community Risk Reduction	(253) 856-4440
FD CARES	(253) 856-4398
Public Education	(253) 856-4480
CPR and First Aid Classes	(253) 856-4300
Disaster Preparedness	(253) 856-4440
RFA Governance Board	(253) 856-4300
Fire Chief: Brian Carson	(253) 856-4300
Newsletter Editor: Janet Upegui	(253) 856-4480
Email	fire@pugetsoundfire.org
Website	pugetsoundfire.org