

CONTACT US!

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Average Response Times

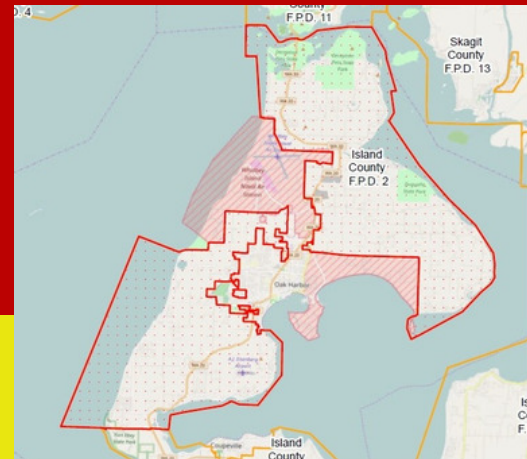
	2014	2015	2016
Fire	9:13	8:38	8:24
EMS	11:19	9:26	9:36

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF BROWN

First of all, thank you for taking the time to read this flyer about the upcoming decision on whether to raise the property tax levy rate to provide additional funds to North Whidbey Fire and Rescue. It is always hard for an organization to go to their community and ask for a raise. We have done everything we can to put this off, but it is inevitable that we would have to ask for this lift. The last time the community set the limit was 1989, and as you know, the cost of everything has increased incredibly since then. Not only does everything cost more, but the community's demand for services has risen many times; it has increased over forty percent in the last five years alone. It is up to the community to decide the level of service they need. With this flyer we are trying to give you as much information as possible to make this important decision.

Thank you for your interest and please vote.

RESPONSE AREA



Our response area covers 55 square miles from Libby Rd to Deception Pass Bridge. Our coverage is shown on the map by the red outline. The areas not outlined in red are the City of Oak Harbor Fire and NAS Fire.

WHAT IS NORTH WHIDBEY FIRE & RESCUE?

NWFR was formerly known as Island County Fire District #2. We are a special purpose district created under title 52 RCW. We were established in 1950 to provide emergency services for North Whidbey Island. We are governed by an elected Board of Fire Commissioners. Our district has 7 fire stations, a district office, 15 fire apparatus, 2 basic life support ambulances, 2 marine rescue boats and 3 command vehicles.

NWFR serves about 18,000 citizens from Libbey Road. to the Deception Pass Bridge. This does not include the City of Oak Harbor and Whidbey Island Naval Air Station which have their own Fire Departments.

NWFR does more than just fight fires. We provide a multitude of services that the community depends on. We provide emergency medical services as most of our personnel are emergency medical technicians (EMTs) as well as staffing for two ambulances through a partnership with WhidbeyHealth. NWFR provides a Marine Search and Rescue Team with two rescue boats and a group of highly trained, dedicated individuals. Other services include a Technical Rope Rescue Team, public CPR instruction, public safety education and many other services to assist the community.

*****ECRWSS****

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NORTH WHIDBEY FIRE & RESCUE

established in 1950

Cost changes from
1989 to 2016

	1989	2016
Gallon of Milk	\$2.78	\$3.62
Gallon of Gas	\$1.16	\$2.75
Fire Engine	\$90,000	\$489,158
Cost to outfit a Firefighter	\$2300.00	\$8600.00

From the start of ICOM, Island County's 911 dispatch center, we responded to 1013 calls in 1999. That's an increase of 124.58% to 2283 calls in 2016.



Potential Property
Tax increase:
\$5.83 per month

If the levy lift fails, it will be difficult to keep our current insurance rating at 5. If vehicle replacement, training and staff aren't adequately maintained to rating bureau standards, we could lose what we've gained. This would cost property owners more in homeowners insurance premiums.

August 1st Primary Election NWFR Property Tax Levy Lift Information for North Whidbey residents

Is this a new tax?

No. This proposition would authorize increasing the District's regular property tax levy rate. Currently the rate is \$0.76 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation (AV); the vote is to increase the rate to \$1.11 per \$1,000 of assessed value. NWFR has the lowest levy rate in Island County.

Why do we need it?

State law sets a 1% limit on property tax increase unless approved by the voters. The last time voters approved a levy increase was 1989. Our operational costs have increased faster than the 1% property tax increase.

We intend to use the increased budget for the following:

- Vehicle replacement program, including 2 engines that require replacement in 2018
- Re-evaluating and making essential adjustments to our staffing model
- Station improvements including remodels and/or replacement
- Equipment repair and upgrades

What drives the cost increases?

Like most businesses and organizations, Fire Department budget increases are related to capital expenditures, personnel costs, supplies and specialized equipment used in day to day operations.

What steps have been taken by NWFR to reduce costs to meet the decreased budget?

- We have approximately 90 volunteers and part-time firefighter/EMTs filling shifts at two fire stations 24/7 to provide additional response capabilities for fire and medical emergencies.
- We have established mutual and automatic aid agreements with Oak Harbor Fire and NAS Whidbey Fire. This allows access to additional resources and firefighters during large incidents.
- Under a contract with WhidbeyHealth we provide staff for two basic life support ambulances; we receive approximately \$400,000 per year. However, as equipment, staffing, training costs have increased, the contract amount no longer covers the full cost of this service to the community.

I would like to hear more about how the Fire District operates. How can I obtain that information?

North Whidbey Fire and Rescue is a transparent organization and we like to hear the input from our citizens. The public is encouraged to attend the Fire District Board Meetings. During the meeting, our Board of Commissioners meet to discuss the business of the District. Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held at our District Office - 770 NE Midway Blvd, in the basement, starting at 7:00 PM. You are also encouraged to call our office with questions or comments and speak with our Fire Chief Michael Brown at 360-675-1131