

Fall 2013

# The Pulse

This fall, voters will be asked if North Kitsap Fire & Rescue and Poulsbo Fire Department can continue collecting the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) property tax levy at the current rate of \$0.50/\$1,000 of assessed valuation.

This is not a new tax and no increase in the tax rate is being proposed; it is a simple continuation of a tax that voters have renewed on a regular basis for nearly thirty years.

**If approved, this fall's EMS levy proposal will simply reauthorize the current tax with no rate increase**

The two fire districts are partners in providing the north end of Kitsap County with emergency response and related services, improving efficiency by sharing resources whenever possible. This newsletter is

just one example of the many cooperative efforts between the agencies.

The districts also share resources in training, public information, apparatus and facilities maintenance, fire and injury prevention, information technology, administration and more.

Most importantly, the two departments provide seamless response to fire, medical and other emergencies.



Poulsbo Fire Department serves 54 square miles and 23,937 people in the northwest portion of the county, and the communities of Port Gamble, Lofall,



Poulsbo, Lemolo and Keyport. North Kitsap Fire & Rescue serves 46 square miles and 18,410 people in the northeast part of Kitsap, and the communities of Hansville, Kingston, Miller Bay Estates, Indianola and Suquamish. Both emergency and non-emergency services -- such as blood pressure checks, outdoor burning permits and more -- are provided from seven staffed and two volunteer stations, shown on the map that appears inside.

Medical responses are the majority of calls at the two departments, totaling about two-thirds of

all incidents. Of a combined 5,937 calls in 2012, 69% were for medical incidents.

Fire districts receive no on-going county, state or federal funding. Nearly 90% of the departments' budgets comes from local property taxes. The EMS levy provides about one-quarter of the districts' operating budgets; renewal of the levy is vital to continued high-quality EMS service.

Ballots will be mailed out to voters in mid-October, and must be postmarked or deposited in a ballot dropbox no later than November 5.



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www.poulsbofire.org  
@poulsbofire facebook/poulsbofire



26642 Miller Bay Rd NE Kingston, WA 98346 (360)297-3619  
www.nkfr.org  
@nkfandr facebook/nkfire

**Questions? Contact us at  
(360)779-3997 or 297-3619**

# Local Kids Join Chain of Survival to Save Dad

A 53 year-old man is alive today because the links in the chain of survival included well-trained and equipped people – some of whom were his own family members – who came together to give him his best chance. A recent study of data submitted to a national registry shows that this kind of success is more common in Kitsap County than in other areas of the United States.

The term “chain of survival” describes the collection of links that, when strong, provide victims of cardiac arrest with best odds for complete recovery. It starts with an early call to 911 to get responders on the way. Next is CPR to keep blood circulating, and an automated external defibrillator (AED) to shock the heart out of its lethal rhythm. Paramedics are the next link, ensuring that the patient has a good airway and delivering stabilizing drugs while transporting the patient to a hospital. The final link is hospital care where patients receive definitive treatment to correct the problem that caused the arrest.

**Tell the 911 center right away where you are: “I’m in Kitsap County and I need an ambulance.”**

On a sunny Sunday afternoon in late April, a teenage daughter found her father unconscious and not breathing. She screamed for help, sparking several 911 calls. The man’s step-son came running, and joined his sister at their dad’s side. The daughter knew what to do; just two weeks before, she had been practicing CPR in her 9th grade health class. Her brother had received CPR training three years ago through the school’s athletic training program. Together, the pair provided life-saving breaths and chest compressions.

Because the efforts to reach 911 were made from cell phones at a location near the water, the calls were received by towers in other counties causing as much as a five minute delay before being transferred to the local dispatch center. From there, crews from the closest fire station were dispatched. The first firefighter/EMTs arrived and, noting the high quality of the CPR provided by the siblings, asked them to continue while the team readied their equipment. The crew delivered two AED shocks to the patient and was administering a third as the paramedic unit arrived. Shortly after, the crew found that the man’s pulse had returned. Within minutes, his airway was secured with a breathing tube, he was loaded into the paramedic unit and was enroute to Bremerton’s Harrison Medical Center. Just over an hour after he was discovered in cardiac arrest, the man was receiving life-saving treatment from physicians and other skilled team members at Harrison’s top-notch cardiac care facility.

He suffered no long-term deficits and walked out of the hospital just ten days after the event.

The study documenting Kitsap County’s success examined data on patients who go into cardiac arrest. Cardiac arrest is defined as absence of breathing and pulse. Without intervention, the condition always results in death. Data on these patients is submitted to the Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival (or, “CARES” Registry). Kitsap County eclipsed both the state and the nation in resuscitation rates for 2011, with local overall survival at almost 17% compared to the state’s record of 15.1% and the nation’s

7.7%. The 2012 statistics are even more impressive for patients whose collapse was witnessed, received bystander CPR and early defibrillation. In these cases, Kitsap County survival rates were 41%

compared to 38.6% in the rest of Washington State and 31.7% across the nation.

Local experts in emergency medical services (EMS) cite several factors in these success rates, such



as coordinated efforts to promote CPR training, public access defibrillation, 911 call-receivers coaching callers in CPR, well-trained emergency medical personnel with cutting-edge knowledge and equipment, and the state-of-the-art cardiac care facilities and personnel of Harrison Medical Center.

Officials point to several important lessons from this survival story:

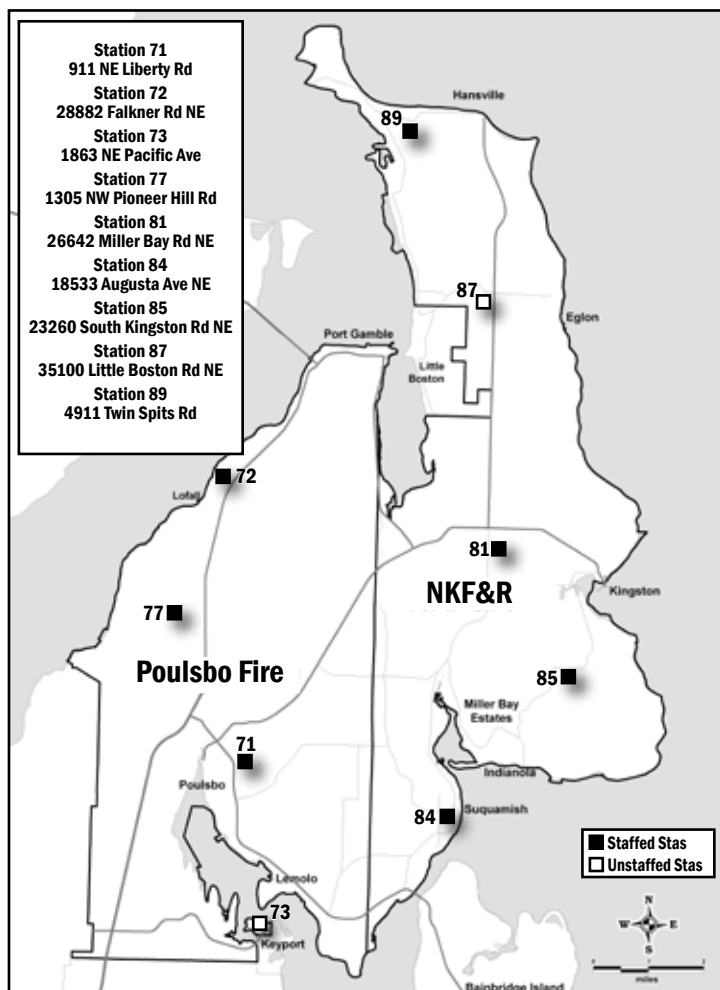
**State where you are when reporting an emergency** – especially when using a cellular phone. It is

common for cell signals to hit towers in nearby counties. Avoid time-consuming confusion by starting your 911 call with the name of the county and a general description of the type of emergency you’re reporting i.e., “I’m in Kitsap County and I need an ambulance.”

**Learn CPR.** Contact your local fire department or the American Red Cross to get class schedules.

**Get close to an AED.** Many schools, athletic clubs, casinos and other places where people congregate have automated external defibrillators. Every fire engine and ambulance in Kitsap County is equipped with a defibrillator.

**Kitsap County’s EMS System is very good** because every link – including the 911 center, bystander CPR providers, emergency responders and Harrison Medical Center – is strong.



**Kitsap County’s EMS system is very good because all of the elements are strong**



# EMS FAQs

We'd like to take this opportunity to share with you the answers to questions most frequently asked about emergency medical services (EMS).

**What's the fastest way to get help?** Although we welcome visitors, we discourage coming to the fire station to report emergencies. Citizens may experience unnecessary delays if crews are out of the station or otherwise unavailable. The 911 system provides the fastest response by automatically dispatching the closest appropriate unit. It is also risky to the patient and others to drive when seriously injured or ill. Better to call 911, and leave the driving to us.

**Why do fire engines respond to medical calls?** It's important to note that all of our firefighters are medically-trained, and all of our engines carry essential equipment such as defibrillators and oxygen. We send engines to aid calls for several reasons: It is vital to get the closest available unit to the incident as quickly as possible. Often times, that unit may be a fire engine. Occasionally, engines may respond to provide additional hands to help. Our ambulances generally carry a crew of two – an EMT and a paramedic, or two EMTs. Critical incidents – such as cardiac arrests, unconscious patients, many heart attacks, some strokes, uncontrolled bleeding, childbirth, etc – may require more personnel than are provided with a single ambulance.

**What does the EMS levy pay for?** Revenue from the EMS levy helps pay for the costs associated with first response to medical incidents. There is never a bill for a medical response. But the levy doesn't provide enough to fund the additional costs associated with ambulance transports. To provide transport services, we must purchase and maintain ambulances as well as stock and staff them. Although billing revenue doesn't cover all of these additional expenses, we can recover some of the costs by billing patients' health insurers. Many fire departments don't provide any ambulance transport at all and avoid the cost of operating ambulances by providing first response to medical incidents from fire engines. In those areas, for-profit ambulance companies provide transport services at rates much higher than ours. Furthermore, private companies' collection policies are far more severe. We work with patients to ensure that our efforts at cost-recovery don't cause anyone financial hardship.

**What's the difference between an EMT and a paramedic?** Both are emergency medical technicians, but those who are called "EMT" have undergone about 120 hours of initial training to earn the EMT-B (Basic) certification. Paramedics hold the EMT-P (Paramedic) certification after completing at least 1,200 hours of initial training. All of our career

firefighters are trained to at least the EMT-B level, and can operate automated external defibrillators as well as administer a limited number of medications. Paramedics are trained to use sophisticated heart monitors and manual defibrillators. Medics can also intubate to secure a patient's airway, start intravenous lines and administer a wide range of life-saving medications.

About 35% of all ambulance transports require the advanced skills of a paramedic while the remainder can go to the hospital with an EMT-B.



## Signs and Symptoms of Heart Attack and Stroke

According to the American Heart Association, heart and blood vessel disease are our nation's number one killer.

**See the  
Emergency  
Medical  
Information  
Card on reverse**

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, while some start slowly. Here are some of the signs that can mean a heart attack is underway:

**Chest discomfort** -- Pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain in the center of chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or comes and goes.

**Discomfort in other areas of the upper body** -- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, the neck the jaw or the stomach.

**Shortness of breath**

**Other signs** -- Cold sweats, nausea or lightheadedness.

Learn the signs and symptoms of stroke, and get help even if the symptoms go away:

**Face drooping** -- One side of the face droops or is numb. The person's smile is uneven.

**Arm weakness** -- One arm is weak or numb. When the person raises both arms, one drifts downward.

**Speech difficulty** -- Speech may be slurred. The person may be unable to speak or hard to understand. Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence, and see if it's repeated correctly.

**Other signs** -- Sudden numbness or weakness of the leg; sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes; sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination; sudden severe headache with no known cause.

**If you suspect heart attack or stroke,  
call 911 immediately**

**FIRE PREVENTION WEEK**  
**OCT. 6-12, 2013**  
**PREVENT**  
**KITCHEN**  
**FIRES**   
**GO TO FPW.ORG**

# Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Fatal fires are most likely to strike in the place where we feel most comfortable, and at a time we're least capable of reacting fast.

More than 80% of all fire deaths occur in the home. The majority happened between the hours of 2:00 and 6:00 a.m. And, two-thirds of these deaths took place in homes without any smoke alarms or with smoke alarms that didn't function.

When smoke alarms don't work, it's usually because the batteries are worn or missing. Increasingly, it's because the smoke alarm itself is too old to be reliable. Smoke alarms should be tested monthly and replaced every ten years.

Working smoke alarms can cut the risk of dying in a fire by more than half. Because smoke alarms are such a powerful tool for preventing fire deaths, Kitsap County fire agencies have won a grant that will allow firefighters and community volunteers to install these life-saving devices free of charge.

To schedule an installation, contact your local fire department.



Fire Commissioners		
Position	North Kitsap Fire & Rescue	Poulsbo Fire Department
1	Wilson Stewart stewart@nkfr.org	Jim Ingalls jingalls@poulsbofire.org
2	Patrick Pearson, Chairman pearson@nkfr.org	Conrad Green cgreen@poulsbofire.org
3	Stephen Neupert neupert@nkfr.org	Martin Sullivan msullivan@poulsbofire.org
4	Gillian Gregory gregory@nkfr.org	David Ellingson dellingson@poulsbofire.org
5	Fernando "Espy" Espinosa espinosa@nkfr.org	Darryl Milton, Chairman dmilton@poulsbofire.org

**OUTDOOR BURN INFORMATION LINE**  
**(360)297-4888**

## More Prevention Resources

We know that the most cost-effective way to keep our communities safe is by helping individuals and families prevent emergencies and to be prepared. In addition to smoke alarm installations, we offer a range of services to keep you and your family safe. Most of these services are free of charge, but donations are accepted to help ensure the programs continue.

- Bike Helmets**
- Address Signs**
- Outdoor Burning Permits**
- Car Seat Checks**  
(in Kingston only)
- Home Safety Surveys**
- Station Tours**
- Life Jackets**
- Blood Pressure Checks**
- Safety Presentations**
- CPR and First Aid Training**  
(in Poulsbo only)

Call Poulsbo Fire Department at (360)779-3997 or North Kitsap Fire & Rescue at (360)297-3619 to learn more about accessing these services. Most require an appointment.

<b>EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION</b>	Patient's Name:		Patient's Date of Birth:			
	Emergency Contact Name:		Contact's Phone:			
	Relationship with Patient:		Alt Phone:			
	Post any <b>ADVANCED DIRECTIVES</b> with this form: <input type="checkbox"/> Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Hospital "Do Not Resuscitate" Order		<b>ALLERGIES (Check all are known):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No Known Allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Latex <input type="checkbox"/> Demerol <input type="checkbox"/> Codeine <input type="checkbox"/> Morphine <input type="checkbox"/> Insect Stings <input type="checkbox"/> Penicillin <input type="checkbox"/> Aspirin <input type="checkbox"/> Sulfa <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
<b>MEDICAL CONDITIONS (Check all that apply):</b>						
<input type="checkbox"/> No Medical Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Pacemaker	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Angina	<input type="checkbox"/> Stroke					
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart Attack	<input type="checkbox"/> Asthma					
<input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS	<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes/Hypoglycemia					
<input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis	<input type="checkbox"/> Seizures					
<input type="checkbox"/> Fractures	<input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding/Clotting Disorder					
<input type="checkbox"/> COPD/Emphysema	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer:					
<input type="checkbox"/> High Blood Pressure						
<b>MEDICATIONS:</b>						
Name	Dose	Per Day	Name	Dose	Per Day	

Fill out this form, and post it on the front of your refrigerator. Keep a duplicate in your wallet or purse. Maintain current information on the card. More copies are available for download at [www.poulsbofire.org](http://www.poulsbofire.org) and [www.nkfr.org](http://www.nkfr.org), or by calling (360)779-3997 or (360)297-3619.