



Why do fire engines respond to medical calls?

There are several reasons why you might see both ambulances and fire engines at aid calls. Our response personnel (including those staffing our fire engines) are certified at the emergency medical technician (EMT) level or higher and our fire engines carry essential medical equipment. Because seconds count in serious emergencies, it's our goal to get the closest available unit to an incident as quickly as possible. Often, that unit may be a fire engine.

There's another reason why an engine might respond on a medical call. Our ambulances usually carry a crew of two. Critical incidents such as cardiac arrests, unconscious patients, heart attacks, strokes, uncontrolled bleeding, etc. may require more personnel than are provided with a single ambulance. Engines may also respond to provide additional crew for labor-intensive or complicated calls.

About Us

North Kitsap Fire & Rescue (NKF&R) provides community risk reduction and all-hazards emergency response to a 51 square mile area on the northern-most tip of Washington state's Kitsap Peninsula, including the communities of Hansville, Little Boston, Kingston, Indianola, Miller Bay and Suquamish. About two-thirds of NKF&R's emergency responses are to emergency medical incidents.

Contact Us

Emergency: Dial 911

Non-Emergency: (360)297-3619

Web: www.nkfr.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NKFire

EMS Billing Information:

(800)238-9398

www.emspatient.com/nkfr/

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Does NKF&R bill for ambulance transports?

Yes: NKF&R bills for ambulance *transports* but there is never a bill for *emergency response*. Revenue from the district's emergency medical services property tax levy funds the cost of first response to medical incidents. However, to provide transport services, we must purchase and maintain ambulances as well as stock and staff them. We recover some of the costs through user fees that are collected primarily by

billing patients' health insurers. Many fire departments don't do transports at all and avoid the cost of operating ambulances by providing first response to medical incidents from fire engines alone. In those areas, for-profit ambulance companies provide transport services at much higher rates than ours. Furthermore, private companies' collection policies are far more severe.

At NKF&R, we don't send anyone to collections and we work with patients to ensure that our efforts at cost-recovery don't cause financial hardship.

When you are covered by health insurance and get emergency care, you are protected from surprise billing or balance billing. See the following links to learn more about your state and federal rights as a patient covered by Medicare and/or private insurance:

- www.cms.gov/nosurprises/consumer
- www.insurance.wa.gov/what-consumers-need-to-know-about-surprise-or-balance-billing

What's the fastest way to get help?

Although we welcome visitors, we discourage coming to the station to report emergencies. If crews are out of the station or already committed to another incident, the public may experience unnecessary delays. Calling 911 ensures the fastest response because the system automatically dispatches the closest appropriate unit.

It is also risky for the patient or others to drive when someone is seriously injured or ill. **Better to call 911 and leave the driving to us.**

What are NKF&R's ambulance transport fees?

NKF&R bills based on the level of care provided: Basic Life Support (BLS) - \$985.00 per transport; Advanced Life Support 1 (ALS 1) - \$1,225.00 per transport; Advanced Life Support 2 (ALS 2) - \$1,410.00 per transport. Additionally, \$22.00 per mile is charged. These rates are effective on January 1, 2026.

