

ThePulse

Spring 2019

EMS STRONG BEYOND THE CALL

National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week is May 19 - 25, 2019. First proclaimed in 1974 by then-President Gerald R. Ford, the annual observance is co-sponsored by the American College of Emergency Physicians and the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians. This year's theme, "EMS Strong: Beyond the Call," gives us the chance to talk about the complex systems necessary to ensure a robust emergency medical services system.

Ambulance services in the United States were mostly unregulated prior to the 1970s. A 1971 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study found that too great a toll was being taken by accidental deaths and disabilities – due, in part, to weak and uncoordinated pre-hospital medical care. NHTSA developed the first set of national standards for emergency medical services that have developed into the coordinated systems that are saving lives across the nation every day.

In Washington state, fire departments aren't required to provide EMS unless voters served by the agency elect to add the service by funding it with an EMS levy. The

fire districts that became North Kitsap Fire & Rescue and Poulsbo Fire Department first passed EMS levies in the late 1970s. EMS levies provide most of the funding for first response. The fire districts try to recover the additional costs associated with ambulance transports by billing insurance companies for that part of the service.

Nearly forty years later, the local system is strong and so are success rates because care is delivered in a seamless, team approach. The professionals at Kitsap 911 answer emergency calls, dispatch responders and provide pre-arrival instructions. More and more citizens are trained to perform CPR and use AEDs (check our websites for a list of upcoming classes). Every day, there are at least three firefighter/paramedics (advanced life support, or ALS, providers) and 18 firefighter/EMTs (basic life support, or BLS, providers) on-duty in seven stations across North Kitsap, and supported by volunteers responding from two additional stations. BLS providers are capable of



Poulsbo Fire and NKF&R work closely to ensure that all calls for emergency services are answered quickly and the needed resources are provided.

handling a majority of medical calls, and are well-trained to begin life-saving treatments for more critical incidents prior to the arrival of ALS providers. Local hospitals provide excellent definitive care – especially for cardiac emergencies. Patients suffering from major trauma or burn injuries are transported by Airlift Northwest helicopter to the region's only level one trauma center at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

At Poulsbo Fire and NKF&R, about two-thirds of all responses involve EMS. In 2018, the two districts answered the call for EMS an average of 12 times every day. Not only is our local system strong, it's busy, too!

The Pulse, published jointly at least once every year, is one of many cooperative efforts between your two local fire departments.

**NORTH KITSAP
FIRE & RESCUE**

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Updates from the Fire Districts

North Kitsap Fire & Rescue and Poulsbo Fire Department are continuing to recover from the 2008 - 2014

economic downturn that caused the districts' revenues to decline even while costs increased. During that time, district

leaders managed to maintain levels of service by practicing austerity, freezing wages, sharing costs through cooperative efforts and deferring capital projects. Even when the economy rebounded, state law caps property tax revenues

Poulsbo Fire

Service Area: 54 square miles

Population Served: 25,992 (2018 OFM Estimate)

2019 Operating Budget: \$9.2 million

2018 Total Calls: 3,990

2018 Medical Calls: 2,316 (58%)

Civilian Employees: 6

Uniformed Employees: 43

Volunteers: 15

Fire Insurance Rating: 4

Fire Chief: Jim Gillard

NKF&R

Service Area: 46 square miles

Population Served: 20,213 (2018 OFM Estimate)

2019 Operating Budget: \$8.6 million

2018 Total Calls: 3,157

2018 Medical Calls: 1,957 (62%)

Civilian Employees: 7

Uniformed Employees: 38

Volunteers: 21

Fire Insurance Rating: 4

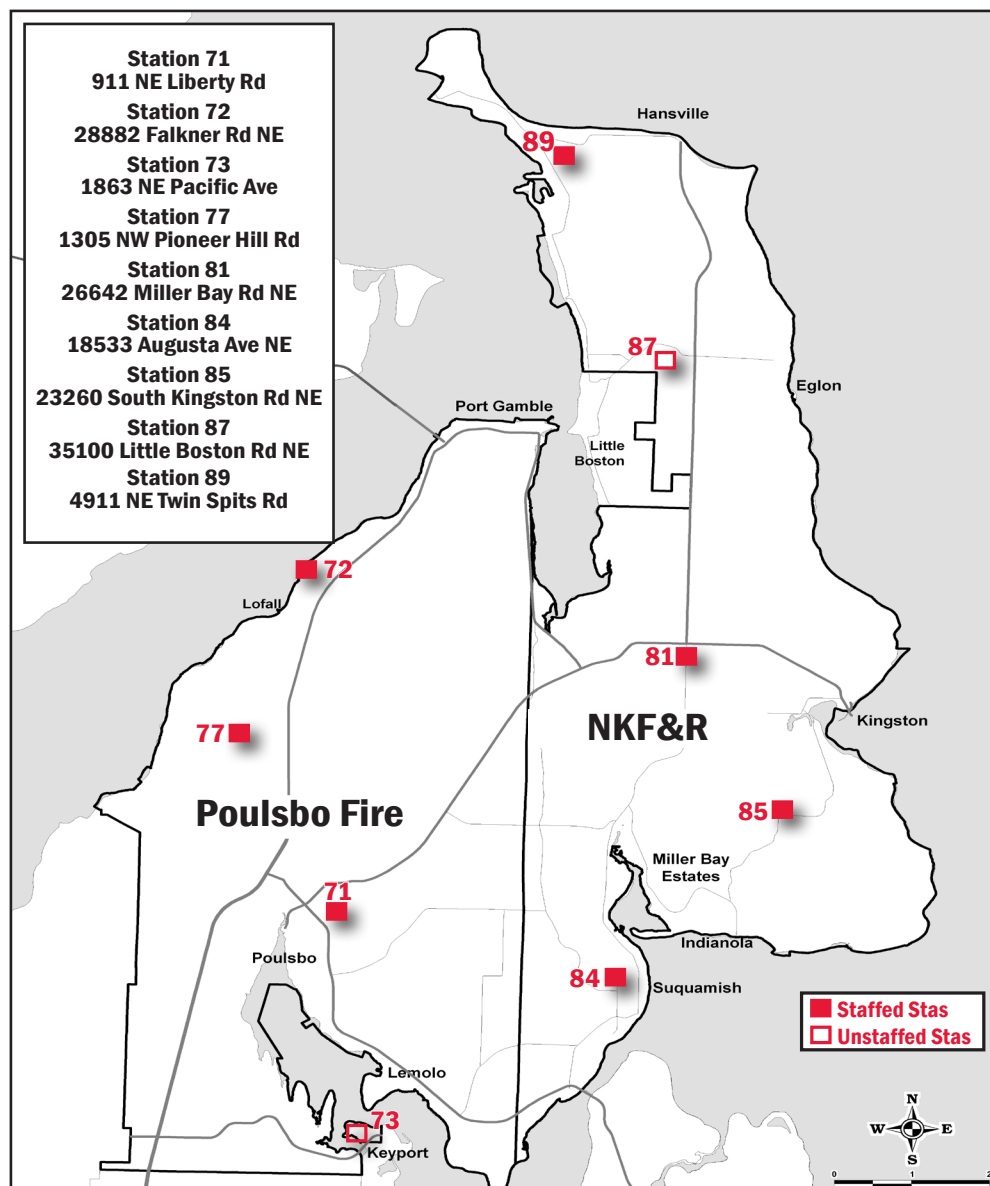
Fire Chief: Dan Smith



increases and fire district budgets couldn't recover at the same rate they fell. Voters approved special measures in 2014 and 2018 that have helped.

Poulsbo Fire Department is wrapping up the last of the projects funded by its 2014 short-term bond issue which included two new fire engines, rechassis of three medic units, replacement of the headquarters station's flat roof, replacement of the headquarters station's failing HVAC system, addition of an emergency generator at Station 72 (Surfrest), repair of the problematic drainage system and the associated repaving of parking lots at the headquarters station, purchase of new firefighter safety gear that meets industry standards and replacement of apparatus bay doors.

North Kitsap Fire & Rescue's 2018 temporary maintenance and operations levy has already helped with the replacement of two ambulances -- one new and one rechassis. Arriving later this year are three staff vehicles and a support truck to replace the current ones that are more than 20 years old. A tender truck, vital for bringing firefighting water to areas lacking hydrants, is also on its way to return the district's tender fleet back to three after the new rig's 30 year-old predecessor failed in 2018. The apparatus maintenance facility's mobile repair unit will also be replaced in 2019.



**North Kitsap Burn Ban
Information Line
(360)297-4888**

Washington state law requires that anyone 12 years of age or younger is wearing a life jacket whenever underway on a vessel less than 19 feet in length. Good safety practices require that everyone, regardless of age or swimming ability, wear a properly-selected and well-fitted life jacket whenever there's a risk of falling into the region's frigid waters.

Why? The water temperatures of Puget Sound hover around 45 - 50 degrees year around. At those temperatures, it doesn't take long for the effects of cold-water immersion to deprive even a strong swimmer of the ability to swim or climb back aboard a boat. Life jackets keep users afloat even after they're no longer able to swim.

To fit a life jacket:

Select a life jacket that's designed for the intended use, and U.S. Coast Guard approved.

Check the label of the life jacket to ensure that it has enough flotation for the intended user's weight.

Try on the life jacket, making sure it's properly fastened. Have the wearer lift their arms straight over their head. Grasp the arm openings and gently pull up to make sure the jacket doesn't ride up over the wearer's chin or face.

For an extra measure of safety, try the life jacket out in shallow water under supervision.

Life jackets are available to borrow at our headquarters fire stations and at loaner kiosks around the community.

How to Fit a Life Jacket



Wildfire CAN Happen Here

May is Wildland Fire Preparedness Month, and the western U.S. is predicted to have a tough wildland fire season in 2019. While it's not unusual to see wildfire striking the more arid landscapes in California, indications are that the problem will also affect the wetter, western regions as well. **As of early April, Washington State Department of Natural Resources had already recorded 51 fires in 2019. Of those incidents, 49 struck in areas west of the mountains.**

Humans are behind the majority of wildland fires and, of those, outdoor burn piles are the most common cause throughout most of the year. Fireworks replace outdoor burn piles as the leading cause during the summer holidays.

What can you do to prevent and prepare for wildfire? Use great caution with all ignition sources and, especially, when burning outdoors. Watch for and observe outdoor burn bans when they're imposed. Leave fireworks to the professionals. Discard cigarettes safely. Create defensible space around your home. Make sure your address is well-marked. Get more advice on wildland fire safety at www.firewise.org.

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.

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.

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



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

property. It can also be an investment in saving money – on fire insurance premiums.

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public's investment is paying off; recent surveys of both Poulsbo Fire and North Kitsap Fire & Rescue have resulted in a district-wide fire protection class of 4 (5 for properties more than 1000' from a fire hydrant). We encourage property and business owners to contact their agents to verify that the districts' rating is reflected in their fire insurance premiums, and to reach out to us for more information, if necessary.

FIRE COMMISSIONERS	
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