



Clallam County Fire District 3

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Fall/Winter 2017-18

Clallam County Fire District 3

NEWSLETTER

Chief's Corner

By Chief Ben Andrews



Since 1914 residents of Clallam County Fire District 3 have volunteered their time and financial support to provide emergency services for the greater Sequim community. Today Clallam County Fire District 3 provides a 24-hour fire and emergency medical response to 30,000 people with a combination of

volunteer, part-time, and full-time personnel. We respond to an average of 7,300 emergency calls per year, and appreciate the support from our community.

EMS accounts for more than 85% of all our emergency calls. Clallam County Fire District 3 primarily funds emergency medical service and fire suppression through two property tax levies. Over time, these levy rates fall as property values rise, which limits the fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year plus a 1% increase allowed by law.

You may have read recently in the local news how the 1% revenue increase is not keeping up with the demand for emergency services due to inflation. After 2018, we will have to draw down reserves just to respond to emergency calls, which have increased 27.4% in the past five years. (Emergency call volumes have almost tripled in the last 20 years.) Personnel are so busy running calls that they have no time for training, building inspections, or other tasks that are important to public safety.

We turned down a \$1 million grant for six additional firefighters because it required additional revenue to provide matching funds. We also are unable to save money for capital needs, such as replacement apparatus, maintaining our facilities and emergency equipment like heart monitors and air tanks.

Voters originally approved a general levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2004. Since that time, the levy rate has fallen to \$1.26. Our fire district likely will ask voters to return the levy to \$1.50 sometime in 2018. If approved, the 24-cent lid lift would be an additional \$60 per year (\$5 per month) for the owner of a \$250,000 home. Funding would be used to maintain emergency service levels, improve staffing as we are able, train personnel, and fund reserves for facility and apparatus needs.

We provide the highest level of emergency service available for any community. As your fire chief, I would like to see this continue.



Disaster Preparedness



Clallam County Fire District 3 is a leader in the region for disaster preparedness. More than 250 community members have been trained in case an earthquake strikes the Olympic Peninsula, which is expected to happen. Disaster preparedness is critical for all communities, but especially those like Sequim that are isolated from more populated areas.

Community Emergency Response Training, or “CERT,” integrates the public into a larger emergency response. In the event of an earthquake or other natural disaster, the fire district will be overwhelmed by calls. Except in most extreme cases, residents should expect to care for themselves and their neighbors for as long as 30 days before help can arrive.



Fire district residents are encouraged to stockpile water, non-perishable foodstuffs, medicines, sanitation items, and pet supplies for a minimum of 30 days. The following links are excellent resources to help you prepare for an emergency:

- www.clallam.net/emergencymanagement/documents/30dayemergency-supplies.pdf
- www.fema.gov/media-librarydata/1390846764394dc08e309debe561d866b05ac84daf1ee/checklist_2014.pdf
- www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m9440096_EmergencyPreparednessChecklist.pdf
- youtu.be/XoatCzTY_k0

If you are interested in becoming CERT-trained, please contact Cindy Zechenelly, CCFD3 CERT Coordinator at cindyiz@hotmail.com or (360) 504-2531.

Fireplace & Wood Stove Safety

More than one-third of Americans use fireplaces, wood stoves and other fuel-fired appliances as primary heat sources in their homes. Heating fires account for 36% of residential home fires in rural areas every year. Often these fires are due to creosote buildup in chimneys and stovepipes. All home heating systems require regular maintenance to function safely and efficiently.

- Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist.
- Clear the area around the hearth of debris, decorations and flammable materials.
- Make sure the fire gets enough air to ensure complete combustion and keep creosote from building up in the chimney.
- Close glass doors when the fire is out to keep air from the chimney opening from getting into the room. Most glass fireplace doors have a metal mesh screen which should be closed when the glass doors are open. This mesh screen helps keep embers from getting out of the fireplace area.
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces that do not have a glass fireplace door.
- Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures.
- Keep air inlets on wood stoves open, and never restrict air supply to fireplaces. Otherwise you may cause creosote buildup that could lead to a chimney fire.
- Use fire-resistant materials on walls around wood stoves.
- Ensure that it is (or was) installed, inspected and approved under a required permit.

