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South Whidbey Fire/EMS

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 SWFireEMS

# FLASH POINT SPRING 2024 Newsletter

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

By Nick Walsh, Fire Chief



We provide an all-hazard, fire and rescue response. We also offer several prevention programs, some of which you can read about in this newsletter.

South Whidbey Fire/EMS is a good steward of your tax dollars, operate under a balanced budget and has pass all independent financial and accountability audits. Another example of this stewardship is our fire levy rate.

Most fire districts our size operate with a fire levy capped at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Voters approved a fire levy of \$0.95 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2021.

The fire levy rate falls as property values increase to limit a fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year. Our fire levy has fallen to \$0.81 per \$1,000. This means funding we receive does not increase at the same rate as your assessed property value.

Inflation and higher call volumes are impacting the level and quality of service we provide. SWFE is asking voters for a \$0.39 fire levy lid lift on the August primary election ballot. If approved by voters, the lid lift will fund:

- Two more firefighters per day
- Staffing at a third station in the southeast part of the district
- Firefighter training programs
- Replacement of aging engines and equipment

Learn more at [www.swfe.org](http://www.swfe.org). I also welcome your questions at 360-321-1533 or [chief@swfe.org](mailto:chief@swfe.org). Thank you for partnering with us to save lives and property.

### CAR SEAT SAFETY PROGRAM


Did you know more than half of car seats are not used or installed correctly? The correct use of car seats can reduce the risk of death by as much as 71%. We offer free car seat checks by appointment *only*. Email [carseats@swfe.org](mailto:carseats@swfe.org) to schedule an appointment.

Our certified Child Passenger Safety Technician will educate you on proper installment, what to do as your child grows, current laws and possible recalls. You will leave with the knowledge to properly install your car seat and secure your child every time.

Find more safety tips on our website, [www.swfe.org/car-seat-safety-program](http://www.swfe.org/car-seat-safety-program)





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## SIGN UP FOR E-NEWS!

Get the latest news! Join the monthly e-newsletter distribution by sending your email address to [info@swfe.org](mailto:info@swfe.org).

### HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR SMOKE ALARM LATELY?

You should replace your smoke alarm batteries once a year. Springtime is a good time to remember to replace the batteries.



We can also help you install or change batteries for smoke or carbon monoxide detectors. Call us at 360-321-1533 and we will schedule a time to assist you.



### DOING YOUR PART: DRIVEWAY ACCESS

If there's a wildfire in the area, firefighters may need to reach your home. If firefighters cannot safely drive a fire truck to your house, they will have to find another way. As a homeowner, you are the first line of defense when it comes to helping your home survive a wildfire.

Do your part to ensure adequate driveway access by making sure:

- You have a safe route to leave your property when evacuation is necessary
- Your address sign and street signs are clearly visible from the road
- Does the area around your driveway have clearance space of at least 13 ½ feet high and 12 feet wide to allow access for emergency vehicles
- Your driveway surface is firmly packed to support the weight of emergency vehicles
- Your driveway is free of gates, fence posts and other obstructions that could restrict access
- There is enough room for emergency vehicles to turn around once they reach your home unless you live close to the street

**Help emergency responders during a wildfire by *doing your part!***