



North County Regional Fire Authority

Serving our Communities with Compassion

Professionalism • Integrity • Pride • Innovation • Ownership

Message from Chief Cermak

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Week is May 21-27, 2023 which provides a great opportunity to update you about our EMS program. This year's theme for EMS Week is "Where Emergency Care Begins." Frankly? It begins with you. Your support for North County Fire & EMS means we can respond to medical emergencies, which account for 86% of all calls in our service area. We fund EMS through a levy of \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Levy rates fall as assessed values of properties rise to limit our fire authority to roughly the same amount of revenue per year. For example, our EMS levy has fallen from the voter-approved rate of \$0.50 in 2015 to \$0.28 per \$1,000 in 2023. Call volumes have increased

to the point where our community requires additional emergency personnel and apparatus. For example, an ambulance can be out of service for up to four hours while transporting a patient to an area hospital in Everett, Arlington, or Mt. Vernon. This leads to longer response times for calls that come in during that time. Higher call volumes also drive-up costs for personnel, equipment, fuel, maintenance, and medical supplies. The lid lift, which will be on the August 1 Primary Election ballot, will fund eighteen firefighter/EMTs or firefighter/paramedics to provide an additional transport unit in service and full-time staffing at Station 96 in Freeborn. The lid lift also will replace three ambulances and fund local training programs to ensure residents continue to receive the highest level of EMS care possible. This will help improve our emergency response capacity district-wide to better serve residents. Returning the EMS levy to \$0.50 per \$1,000 would cost an additional \$99 per year or \$8.25 per month for the owner of a \$450,000 home. We encourage you to visit our website to learn more. Thank you.



Another Clean Audit!

North County Regional Fire Authority, known as "North County Fire & EMS," provides fire suppression and emergency medical service to 46,000 people over 120 square miles including the cities of Stanwood and Arlington. Personnel respond to approximately 10,000 calls per year, 86% of which are for emergency medical services. North County Fire & EMS operates under a balanced budget and has passed all its independent audits by the state. Transparency and accountability to our taxpayers is critical to maintaining the public trust. That's why we are pleased to announce that financial and accountability audits of the Fire Authority were clean with no findings. Residents are encouraged to review these reports at www.sao.wa.gov. The Washington State Auditor's Office says, "Independent audits provide essential accountability and transparency for Fire Authority operations. This information is valuable to management, the governing body, and public stakeholders when assessing the government's stewardship of public resources."

Thank You, First Responders!

EMS Week (May 21-27, 2023) In 1974, President Gerald Ford authorized EMS Week to celebrate practitioners and their important work in our communities. This year's theme "Where Emergency Care Begins" focuses on the essential role of frontline personnel in delivering emergency medical care before and after hospital visits. North County Fire & EMS provides both Basic and Advanced Life Support care 24 hours a day. Basic Life Support (BLS) is an emergency transport provided by certified firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). Advanced Life Support (ALS) is provided when a patient is in more critical condition and a paramedic is required to assist in the treatment before and/or during transport to the emergency facility. Paramedics have more than 1,200 hours of training to administer IVs or other advanced medical solutions in case of heart attack stroke or trauma. We are grateful to the men and women who serve to provide these life-saving skills for our community.

Thank you!



 **EMS WEEK**
Where Emergency Care Begins
May 21-27, 2023



Why do multiple emergency vehicles show up on a call to 9-11 for an Emergency Medical issue?

North County Regional Fire Authority provides service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to the cities of Arlington and Stanwood and our rural communities in our response area including Bryant, Freeborn, Warm Beach and Kayak Point. Over 85% of our call volume annually is for Emergency Medical Services. For most of our EMS calls, there will be 2 emergency vehicles that respond. Our units are staffed with a combination of Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).

Our county-wide 911 center (SNOCOM) uses a criteria-based dispatch system based on the information that is provided to the dispatcher. We commonly send one to three units to a 9-11 call because of this criteria-based dispatch and tiered level of response.

There is no such thing as a routine medical call. All calls require assessing the patient, obtaining vital signs and determining the severity of the situation. Sometimes they require an advanced airway, intravenous drugs, or monitoring cardiac events. All of these events are done more efficiently when you have the correct number of personnel on the scene. Often medic and aid cars transport patients to hospitals that are out of our service area. Because of this, EMTs on a fire engine are often closer to a call and can begin initial aid until the medic or aid unit arrives.

Please do not be alarmed if you see multiple vehicles respond to a call! It does not always indicate a severe situation. You are seeing a response team prepared to deal with an emergency with adequate staff and supplies.

Community Resource Paramedic Program

The Community Resource Paramedic (CRP) program is a community-based healthcare initiative in which paramedics function outside their traditional emergency response roles. Our program has three goals; Improving the quality of life for our patients; improving the health of the community as a whole and reducing the burden on our emergency medical services system. Operating on a referral basis, our CRP connects with patients identified by responding fire department crews. Although there are many potential reasons for a referral, the most common is repeated calls to 911 for emergency medical services (EMS). The goal is to work with the patient to find long-term, sustainable solutions to their complex medical and social challenges. We often find that there are alternatives to EMS that better

serve both the patient and our regional healthcare system. Intended to be flexible and broad, the program is a collaborative effort between the patient and our Community Resource Paramedic. Our CRP can assist with medical transportation, help patients understand and manage their medications, and provide education on complex medical conditions. Patients are also eligible to receive an in-home safety assessment focusing on preventing falls. Although every patient requires a different approach, the guiding premise remains constant; to help our patients navigate the healthcare system and live happier, healthier lives. The program has shown success in creating a healthier community and reducing the burden on responding EMS crews and area hospitals. On average, patients show a 39% reduction in 911 calls after enrollment in the program. Partially funded by The North Sound ACH and Olson Foundation, the program is completely free to citizens of the Fire Authority. Questions about the program can be directed to our Community Resource Paramedic, Matt Hickman. He can be reached at 360-629-2184, extension 4807.





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GRANDVIEW FIREFIGHTERS NEEDED!

Following several meetings in the Grandview community (East of Highway 9 at the Bryant Store) earlier this year we are reaching out to residents who live Northeast of 284th Street NE (sharp curve on the Grandview Road) to assess their interest in volunteering for North County Regional Fire. The level of commitment will vary depending on the response from the community. We will propose a program based on the individuals and the amount of time they can commit. A fully credentialed volunteer Firefighter/EMT requires approximately 400 hours of initial training. Another option is a Fire Brigade that could respond to fires and work to mitigate the situation in a defensive position. This component would have no EMS training and only work to contain a fire until our crews arrive. Based on the response, we will evaluate the best option to move forward. Please email a Letter of Interest to Deputy Chief Dave Kraski at dkraski@northcountyfireems.com.

Reflective Address Signs

We recommend having a blue reflective address sign at your residence to make it easier to find your home in case of an emergency. If you would like to purchase an address sign, please call 360-629-2184. Suggested Donation of \$12.



Proudly serving the cities of Stanwood and Arlington, and the communities of Bryant, Freeborn, Warm Beach, Kackman, Kayak Point, and the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians.

