



Lake Stevens Fire Dispatch

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Touching Lives Today - Planning for Tomorrow

Message from the Chief

Lake Stevens Fire wishes you and your family a peaceful and joyful holiday season! We also want to thank you for supporting the work we do. We appreciate the opportunity to serve our community every day.

I wanted to take a moment to share what's on the horizon for Lake Stevens Fire in 2017. First, we are going through an extensive strategic planning process to identify personnel, facility and apparatus needs to keep our community safe. The Lake Stevens area is experiencing significant growth, and we must be ready to respond to the increasing demand for emergency services.

Emergency calls have increased 23.5% for our fire district in the past five years alone. Leading the charge is the demand for emergency medical services, which represented 75% of all calls in 2015. (We will share 2016 numbers when we have them after the first of the year.) Undoubtedly, EMS is the emergency service our community relies on most.

Lake Stevens Fire funds emergency services through a fire levy and an EMS levy paid through property taxes. The EMS levy, for example, funds Basic and Advanced Life Support with 14 full-time and part-time firefighters and paramedics responding 24 hours a day. In addition to personnel, funding is used to replace ambulances, maintain existing apparatus, training and certifications, medical equipment, and first aid supplies.

State law limits our ability to raise revenue by 1% per year, but the costs to provide service are often more than this. Higher than normal call volumes add to this pressure.

We plan to start a conversation with our community about emergency service levels in early 2017. I hope you will participate in this discussion, and let us know your thoughts as we move forward. In the meantime, thank you again for supporting your local fire district. We appreciate you partnering with us to save lives and property.

Take Care & Stay Safe,
Chief Kevin O'Brien



Christmas / Toy-Related Safety Tips

Lake Stevens Fire wishes you and your family a safe holiday season. Please review these toy-related safety tips before purchasing gifts for your children!

- ◆ Magnets—For children under age six, avoid building sets with small magnets. If swallowed, serious injuries and/or death can occur.
- ◆ Small Parts—For children younger than age three, avoid toys with small parts, which can cause choking.
- ◆ Ride-on Toys—Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast and falls could cause injury. Helmets and safety gear should be sized to fit.
- ◆ Projectile Toys—Projectile toys such as air rockets, darts and sling shots are for older children. Improper use of these toys can result in serious eye injuries.
- ◆ Chargers and Adapters—Charging batteries should be supervised by adults. Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to children.



Serving People • Saving Life • Protecting Property



Lake Stevens Fire
1825 South Lake Stevens Road
Lake Stevens, WA 98258
425.334.3034
www.lsfire.org

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@LakeStevensFire

**Remember to check
your smoke alarms and
practice your escape plan.**

Check your smoke alarms and practice your escape plan at least twice a year. Please call if you need assistance changing your smoke alarm batteries.

**Give your child a safe ride
while in the car!**

Call today to schedule an appointment for us to check your child's car seat for proper fit and installation.

Levy Rates Dropping for Lake Stevens Fire
**Call volumes increasing and more growth
is expected.**

The Board of Fire Commissioners for Lake Stevens Fire passed its 2017 budget. The fire district is debt free and financially secure with a balanced budget, adequate reserves and another clean audit. However, increasing call volumes, and declining levy rates for fire and emergency medical services are causing the agency some concern.

Daily operations at Lake Stevens Fire are funded primarily through a fire levy and an EMS levy paid through property taxes. These levy rates fall over time as property values rise within the fire district. For example, the EMS levy, which voters approved at 50 cents per \$1,000, is currently at 34 cents. It is expected to fall to 32 cents in 2017.

Declining levy rates coupled with high call volumes mean that the demand for emergency services often outpaces the revenue collected to provide it. Lake Stevens Fire has seen a 23.5% increase in emergency calls over the past five years. At the same time, state law limits the fire district to a 1% revenue increase per year.

Lake Stevens Fire is going through a strategic planning process to meet the current and future demand for emergency services. So far, the most pressing need the fire district has identified centers around its EMS program. In 2015 Lake Stevens Fire responded to 5,164 calls; and 75% of those calls were EMS-related. EMS calls alone have increased 21% over the past five years. More calls mean added costs for personnel, medical supplies, equipment, fuel, maintenance, and emergency personnel.

