



# Snohomish County FIRE DISTRICT 7

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2019 NEWSLETTER - Summer Edition

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# Snohomish County FIRE DISTRICT 7 NEWSLETTER

2019 - Summer Edition



## Prevention Corner

### Summer Grilling Safety Tips:

- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat.
- Create a three foot safety zone around your grill for children and pets.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals cool completely before disposal.
- Have a safe summer!

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## Fire Levy Lid Lift Information

### What's on my ballot?

Snohomish County Fire District 7 is asking voters to return the fire levy back to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This is called a "fire levy lid lift."

### Why is my fire district asking for a lid lift?

The fire levy provides a majority of funding for emergency services. A lid lift will help us keep up with increasing call volumes and rising inflation rates.

### Have voters approved this amount before?

Yes, voters approved a fire levy of \$1.50/\$1,000 in 2017. The fire levy has fallen to \$1.36/\$1,000 since that time.

### Why do levy rates fall?

Levy rates fall as property values rise to limit the fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year, plus a one percent increase allowed by law. This one percent is not keeping up with the demand for service or inflation which is almost three percent for our area.

### How much will the lid lift cost?

The 14-cent lid lift would cost the owner of a \$450,000 home \$63 per year (\$5.25 per month) to maintain emergency service levels.

### How long will it last?

The lid lift would last for six years and cannot exceed the voter-approved rate of \$1.50/\$1,000.

### What will it pay for?

The fire levy pays for daily operations, such as emergency personnel, equipment, apparatus, medical supplies, and facility repairs or replacement.

### Doesn't the fire district get more taxes because of increasing property values?

The fire district is limited to a one percent revenue increase per year by state law regardless of how much your home appreciates in value. In other words, we do not receive a 15 percent increase in revenue if your home value increases by that amount.

*continued inside . . .*

## Dear Neighbor,

It is an honor as the Fire Chief to serve the citizens of Snohomish County Fire District 7. One of our values is continuous improvement, and with your support we have been able to build one of the best fire districts to serve your family. As our community continues to grow, it is vital that we plan to meet the increased demand for service. In 2018, we responded to 11,170 emergency calls, which is five percent higher than previous years. To meet this demand for service, many fire districts look to regional partnerships or merging to improve service.

Fire District 7 has been successful in partnering and merging with other fire districts in the county to create long-term cost efficiencies. For example, Monroe Fire merged with Fire District 7 in 2016, which eliminated the need to continue an additional maintenance and operations levy. The merger created more consistent and dedicated staffing, and reduced the overall community insurance rating, which lowered fire insurance costs for property owners. Lake Stevens Fire also is considering merging with us this year which will improve emergency services for both communities and be more cost-effective for taxpayers.

These partnerships help Fire District 7 manage costs, maintain, and improve emergency service levels. We also ask our community to regularly participate in "levy lid lift" elections to weigh in on funding decisions that impact service levels. A lid lift simply means that we ask you to restore a levy rate to an amount previously approved by voters.

Fire District 7 is asking voters to consider a lid lift to its fire levy. More information can be found in this newsletter. The fire levy provides a majority of funding for your emergency services. Voters approved \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2017. The levy rate has since fallen to \$1.36.

Call volumes have increased and inflationary costs are higher than the revenue we have to provide service. A lid lift will help us to continue to maintain and improve emergency service levels for the next six years. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Your continued support helps build one of the most advanced emergency response systems in Snohomish County. We want to thank you for recognizing the important role emergency services play in the safety and well-being of you, your family, and our communities. We encourage and value your input to ensure we are meeting the needs of the public, and earning your trust through action.



Chief Gary Meek  
GMeek@snofire7.org

# Fire Levy Lid Lift Information

continued

## What about taxes from "new growth"?

This tax revenue is used to make sure an emergency response (including adequate staffing levels, apparatus, facilities, equipment, and supplies) is available for new homes in the fire district.

## Who votes on this lid lift?

Only registered voters in Fire District 7 vote on the lid lift.

## How does this levy lid lift affect a potential merger with Lakes Stevens Fire?

It doesn't. Taxpayers in both fire districts have approved the same fire levy rate for emergency services of \$1.50/\$1,000. This rate would be the same regardless of the proposed merger.

## Why don't you ask for an excess levy for emergency services?

An excess levy is requested by fire districts that need more than \$1.50/\$1,000 for daily operations. This would be an added tax that we do not need because of sound financial policies, long-range planning, and partnerships/merger with neighboring agencies to be more efficient.

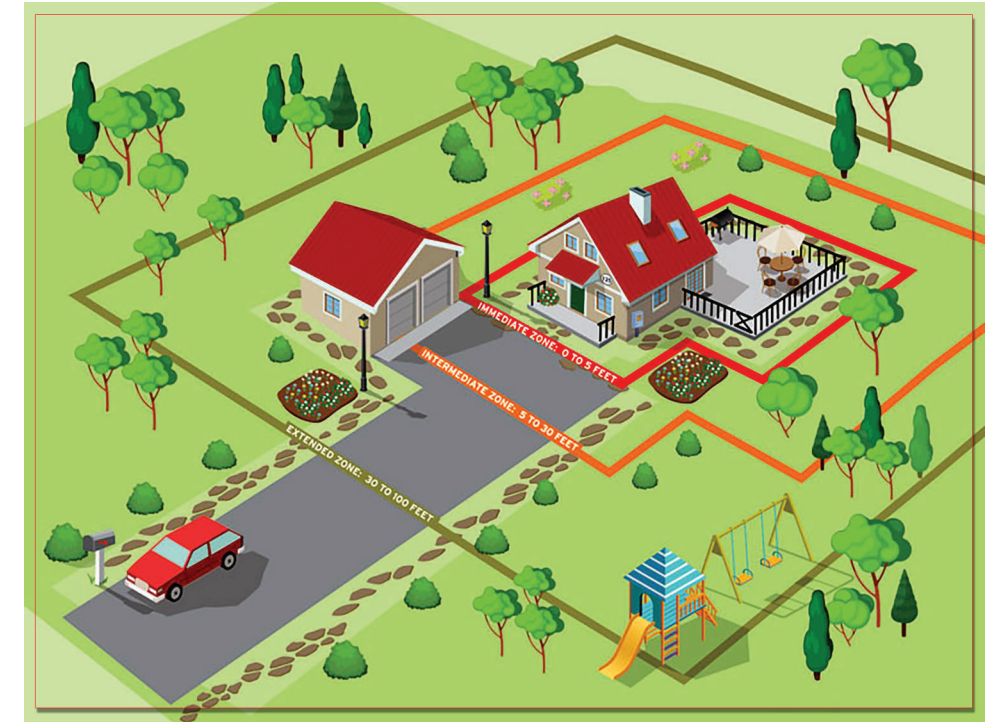
## What is the fire district doing to make our tax dollars stretch further?

Fire District 7 has partnered and/or merged with neighboring agencies to share costs for programs and services. For example, Monroe merged with Fire District 7, which reduced its combined levy rate for emergency services. Lake Stevens also is considering a merger to improve emergency services for both communities and be more cost-effective for taxpayers.

# Wildland Fire

Despite experiencing the snowiest February on record, in March, Western Washington saw more wildfires in one week throughout the Puget Sound than most communities see in a year. That, coupled with record-setting heat in May, one thing is for certain: last year and this year are not typical wildfire seasons.

2018 was a devastating wildfire year for the State of Washington. There was a record number of wildfires, and smoke which enveloped much of the state during a time we would have preferred to enjoy the outdoors. 1,850 wildfires burned in Washington last year, and approximately 40 percent of those were in Western Washington.



"Significant drought conditions exist in the majority of the west side of the state," State Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz told KIRO Radio. "Unfortunately, we're likely to see even more significant fires and more significant smoke this year."

The state's predictions are backed up by the National Interagency Fire Center, which in early June released graphics showing that all of Western Washington will be more prone to wildfire risk throughout the summer.

"Being aware of the risks is what brings an opportunity to reduce those risks," says Deputy Chief Michael Fitzgerald, who heads up Fire District 7's Division of Community Risk Reduction (CRR). "Our CRR professionals have been busy evaluating wildfire risks in each of our communities. We have developed educational presentations using Firewise USA curriculum and other tools of risk reduction to partner with our communities to help make them more safe."

The Firewise USA program helps communities develop partnerships, conduct wildfire risk analysis, share education throughout the community, pursue

peace of mind, and develop a targeted approach to wildfire safety and fuel mitigation.

"Because Fire District 7 employs a Geographical Information System professional, we can partner with our communities to develop a community risk assessment, and help promote successful Firewise USA programs," said Fitzgerald.

As we approach the drier months of summer, there are small steps homeowners can take to reduce the risk of wildfire damage to their home. Embers and small flames are the main way the majority of homes ignite in wildfires. Creating defensible space around your home by clearing combustible vegetation and debris is one way to protect your home. For more information about protecting your home visit [www.FireWise.org](http://www.FireWise.org).

Fire District 7 is committed to providing the highest level of service to our citizens. We have a number of programs to help reduce wildfires in our community.

- Fire District 7 administers an Outdoor Burning program for residents to burn vegetative yard fuels during months when wildfire danger is low
- The Outdoor Burning program bans outdoor burning during the months of July and August, as well as any time there is a burn ban in effect
- Special wildland firefighting apparatus are pre-positioned to locations throughout the fire district in order to most efficiently respond to fires
- All firefighters are specially trained as wildland firefighters so that we can respond to and operate for days or weeks at wildland fires within the fire district
- Firefighters with specialized wildland firefighting certifications are regularly sent to interagency mobilizations in eastern Washington and other states to gain experience and knowledge to bring back to Fire District 7 and share with others

If you would like a presentation on the wildfire dangers for your community, please contact Heather Chadwick at 360-282-3962 or [riskreduction@snofire7.org](mailto:riskreduction@snofire7.org)

# Kids' Corner

## Decode Secret Message

Match the letters of the alphabet to the number to find the answer. (This word has been done for you)

**S A F E T Y**  
19 1 6 5 20 25

2 15 1 20 9 14 7

6 12 15 1 20 9 14 7

19 23 9 13 13 9 14 7

12 1 11 5 19

18 9 22 5 18 19

6 21 14

Key:

- 1=a
- 2=b
- 3=c
- 4=d
- 5=e
- 6=f
- 7=g
- 8=h
- 9=i
- 10=j
- 11=k
- 12=l
- 13=m
- 14=n
- 15=o
- 16=p
- 17=q
- 18=r
- 19=s
- 20=t
- 21=u
- 22=v
- 23=w
- 24=x
- 25=y
- 26=z

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