



# The Responder

Volume 12, Issue 2  
February, 2019



## Feature Stories

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## 2019 STATISTICS

Jan. 1 — Jan. 31

### District Average Response Time:

9 min. 02 sec.

### Responses by Type:

Fire: 10  
EMS: 275  
Other: 97

**Total: 382**

Overlapping: 102



*Proudly serving the communities of Blaine, Birch Bay, Custer, Laurel and the unincorporated areas of Lynden & Bellingham*

*“Providing Quality Service for a Safe Community”*

## Member Profile



*by Charlie Baldwin*

I was born and raised in Blaine and attended the Blaine School District from kindergarten through High School, grad-

uating in 2015. I am 22 years old. My immediate family, and most of my extended family also live in Whatcom County, so I spend most of my free time with family and friends. I have three younger brothers who range in age from 10 to 20.

I knew early on that I wanted to be a firefighter. After getting a chance to go on several ride-a-longs with NWFR, I graduated from Skagit Valley College’s Fire Protection program in 2017.

While at Skagit, I had the opportunity to work at several departments in Skagit and Snohomish Counties, including two years as a volunteer at Skagit District 13 near La Conner, during which I was a resident for about a year; at Skagit District 14 in Alger; and also at North County Fire and EMS in and around the Stanwood area. I was grateful to be able to learn, to work, and to meet other emergency personnel at these places, but always *continued on pg. 2*

## Communication

*by Julie Steding*

When fire departments experience some type of team failure, disgruntled employees, difficult implementation of a new policy or other internal issues, it is natural for many to say that a lack of communications is the problem. There are some common mistakes and misconceptions regarding organizational communications. However, there are often deeper organizational problems that contribute to real and perceived road blocks with information flow. Let’s look at the top signs that indicate it’s time to address communications within your department:

**QUANTITY OVER QUALITY:** Just because you produce

and distribute a lot of information doesn’t mean you are communicating effectively. Many organizations mistake the volume of communications for quality communications. Amid daily memos and the multitude of emails about upcoming events, births, deaths, training opportunities, etc., it is easy to miss critical operational information. Firefighters are not sitting in front of a computer waiting on your next message. So sending vast amounts of emails is not the answer to providing quality information.

**LEADER’S LOCATION:** Most departments have multiple work locations that are directly supervised by offsite personnel. Time and responsibilities limit opportunities for

face-to-face communications, and when possible it may be necessarily brief. It is common for leaders to spend more time communicating with those who are geographically close to them. A message may become condensed when repeating it multiple times throughout a shift.

**ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES:** It is very easy for bureaucracies to add layer after layer of accountability to ensure policy compliance. If not intentionally structured to reduce friction it quickly becomes a barrier to accomplishment. Streamlining processes can improve the quality of communications. Multi-layered *continued on pg. 2*

Please remember to keep the district up to date with any changes including your contact information.

All changes should be directed to Kelly. These changes may include:

Phone

Address

Email

Banking

Family Additions

Name changes

## Profile cont.

*continued from pg. 1*



hoped that I would have a chance to come home and serve the residents of Whatcom County. I'm thankful to have the opportunity to do that at NWFR.

I enjoy sports. Growing up, I enjoyed playing a lot of them, and also spent a lot of time watching my brothers do the same. Over the years I played basketball, football, golf, baseball, and ran cross-country. From time to time I still enjoy getting up early on Friday mornings and playing basketball with friends and family, and play-

ing the occasional round of golf with my grandfather.

Hobbies of mine include skiing, duck and deer hunting, and four-wheeling. I also enjoy camping with friends in the sand dunes at Moses Lake once or twice a year.

When I was fourteen, I worked with a friend who started a landscaping business in the Blaine area that kept us busy for about six years. More recently, I worked for a local landscaping company. While in high school, I worked at a local lumber yard and building center.

I look forward to continuing to develop knowledge, skills and experience at NWFR, and to serve the people who live here in Whatcom County.



## Communication cont.

*continued from pg. 1* are required to negotiate approvals for everything from equipment requests to payroll errors sets organizational leaders up for failure. These layers are no different than pinch points with an advancing hose line. Extra time and resources the obstacle, making us less efficient.

**INCONSISTENT MESSAGES:** When members of the organization hear one thing and see another this creates uncertainty and destroys trust. Inconsistency is a common mistake that confuses those on the receiving end and under-

mines the credibility of future communications.

**LACK OF COLLABORATION:** In some organizations separate divisions function as though they are in competition. This silo effect limits the open flow of communication between those that play key roles in completing the strategic puzzle. The silo mindset also spills over to individual members who become reluctant to share critical information.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:** Most departments understand and operate

response under the incident command system where responsibilities and authority are clearly defined. However, in the day-to-day management of the department many organizational structures are in place to satisfy the most powerful people in the organization. Maybe a trusted friend is promoted to a new position outside of his/her previous division but is allowed to retain management responsibilities of certain units or departments in their old division. Personalization of an organizational structure leads to duplicated *continued on pg. 3*



# Generator Safety



Downed utility lines, power company blackouts, heavy snow falls or summer storms can all lead to power outages. Many people turn to a portable generator for a temporary solution without knowing the risks.

Generators should be used in well ventilated locations outside at least 5 feet away from all doors, windows and vent openings. Measure the 5-foot distance from the generator exhaust system to the building.

Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.

Place generators so the exhaust fumes can't enter the home

through windows, doors or other openings in the building. The exhaust must be directed away from the building.

Make sure to install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer's instructions for correct placement and mounting height.

Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is hot.

Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the container outside of living areas.

### Just Remember...

When plugging in appliances, make sure they are plugged directly into the generator or a heavy duty outdoor-rated ex-

tension cord. The cords should be checked for cuts, tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.

If you must connect the generator to the house wiring to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install a properly rated transfer switch in accordance with the National Electrical Code (NEC) and all applicable state and local codes

**FACT**  
A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a longer period of time or by a large amount of CO over a shorter amount of time.



### Events to Celebrate

#### February Birthdays

- 5 — Paul VanDyken
- 6 — Zak Balonick
- 10 — Commissioner Andrews
- 16 — Burr McPhail
- 19 — Commissioner Bosman
- 21 — Mel Mulligan
- 22 — Jeff Hofstad
- 23 — Darren Bruya
- 26 — Danny Jensen
- 27 — Shawn Atwood

#### Blaine Food Bank Donation

2018 total - 505 pounds

#### Fire Commissioner Meetings

#### NWFR

Thurs. February 21  
9408 Odell St 61 Blaine —  
1:00 p.m.

#### District 4

Tues. February 14  
4142 Britton Loop St 12  
Bellingham — 12:00 p.m.



## NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

# Communication cont.

continued from pg. 2



effort, confusion and inefficiency.

**MISALIGNMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES** Some organizations spend a great deal of time ensuring that the styles and talents of individuals

match up with other members, the mission and assigned duties. Others just assign the next person in line with little thought to functionality, personality and skill set. When employees are viewed as single resources or "warm bodies" merely filling a vacancy, poor communications is inevitable.

**LACK OF HONEST FEEDBACK:** Many managers openly ask for feedback and then become very defensive and often use the feedback against the person providing it. Once an

employee is attacked, passed over for promotion or reassigned to another position as a result of providing honest feedback, the handwriting is on the wall. Other members are quick to adapt and modify their responses to only endorse what they think the manager wants to hear.

**SELECTIVE DISTRIBUTION:** Information is often associated with power. When leaders cherry pick who gets information based

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4142 Britton Loop Rd.  
Bellingham, WA 98226

Providing quality service for  
a safe community



### Free Friends and Family CPR Classes 2019

Class will be held  
from 6:00 p.m.—9:30  
p.m. at various fire sta-  
tions around the district.  
Check out  
www.nwfrs.com for more  
information and to re-  
serve your spot.

February 27  
March 27  
April 24  
May 29  
June 15 CPR and First  
Aid  
June 26  
July 31  
August 11  
September 21  
September 25  
October 30  
November 20  
December 18



Donations of nonperishable food  
items are encouraged but not  
mandatory. All food donations  
will be forwarded to local area  
food banks.

## Communication cont.

continued from pg. 3

on personality and not organi-  
zational function, the people  
who need the information are  
sometimes the last ones to  
know. This again attacks the  
trust within the organization  
leading to a breakdown in com-  
munications.

**LACK OF DIRECTION  
AND PURPOSE :**  
Most every department has a  
mission statement and list of  
core values, but are they real?  
Do they actual mean anything  
to our organization and mem-  
bers? The military uses the term  
“commander’s intent” in much  
of their training. Officers and  
leaders are trained to communi-  
cate the purpose and intent of

the mission and not just to is-  
sue orders. This allows individ-  
uals involved in the work to  
accomplish this mission and  
adapt their approach when  
faced with adversities that are  
not part of the formal policy or  
plan. This creates an empower-  
ment of the workforce to ac-  
complish the mission and get  
results. If leadership has not  
provided a meaningful and re-  
latable direction and purpose  
then individuals or divisions  
create their own. When this

occurs it is the same as ask-  
ing musicians to play togeth-  
er without knowledge of the  
music on the program.  
Effective communication is  
critical in the fire service.  
Your life may depend on  
your ability to communicate  
clearly, so it is important to  
put a good communication  
flow in place and to work on  
its continual improvement.

For more information, visit  
the [Firecom](http://Firecom) website.



## Senegalese Peanut Soup



*Chickpeas have a slightly nutty  
taste and a thick, creamy texture  
when pureed—making them an  
excellent stand-in for some of the  
peanut butter.*

### Ingredients

One 15-ounce can chickpeas,  
rinsed and drained  
3 TBS reduced-sodium chick-  
en broth  
3 TBS natural creamy peanut  
butter  
1 tsp peanut oil  
2 onions, chopped  
One 1” piece peeled ginger-  
root, minced  
1 1/2 tsp curry powder  
1/2 tsp ground cumin  
One 14 1/2 -ounce diced to-

matoes 1/4 tsp cayenne pep-  
per, or to taste  
Chopped cilantro

Serve, sprinkled with cilantro

Serves: 4

### Directions

In a blender or food proces-  
sor, combine the chickpeas,  
1/2 cup of the broth and the  
peanut butter; puree.

In a large nonstick saucepan  
or Dutch oven, heat the oil.  
Sauté the onions and ginger-  
root until the onions are soft,  
7-8 minutes.

Stir in the curry powder and  
cumin; sauté 1 minute longer.

Add the remaining 2 1/2  
cups of broth, the tomatoes  
and the chickpea mixture;  
simmer 5 minutes to blend  
the flavors.

Season with the cayenne.

### Per serving:

215 calories  
11 g. total fat  
2 g saturated fat  
0 mg cholesterol  
217 mg sodium  
20 g total carbohydrate  
6 g dietary fiber  
10 g protein  
61 mg calcium

*“If you’re craving the rich taste of  
peanuts but not the fat and calo-  
ries, this unusual soup fills the  
bill. Make it a day ahead of time,  
if possible, to let the flavors devel-  
op even more.”*

