



Volume 14 Issue 7

July, 2021



**Feature Stories**

- Levy Lid Lift Info
- Fireworks Safety
- Rookies

**2021 STATISTICS**

*June 1 — June 30*

**District Average Response Time:**

9 min. 26 sec.

**Responses by Type:**

Fire: 11

EMS: 293

Other: 144

**Total: 448**



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

*“Providing Quality Service for a Safe Community”*

**You Asked, We Answered: About Prop. 2021-3 | Fire Levy Lid Lift**

North Whatcom Fire and Rescue (NWFR) / Fire Protection District 21 is asking our voters to consider a renewed fire levy rate. We want to ensure you have facts about this important ballot measure so we’ve been in the community talking to residents and businesses, sharing information and making presentations.

**We are also hosting virtual meetings – please join us at either session!**

Thursday, July 15; 3 pm	Tuesday, July 20; 7 pm
Zoom: <a href="https://zoom.us/j/96250395043">https://zoom.us/j/96250395043</a>	Zoom: <a href="https://zoom.us/j/92727729856">https://zoom.us/j/92727729856</a>
Dial in: +1-253-215-8782, 96250395043	Dial in: +1-253-215-8782, 92727729856

Here are the most frequently asked questions (and answers!) about the fire levy lid lift that we are hearing from the community.

**Why is NWFR asking voters to consider Prop. 2021-3, the Fire Levy Lid Lift?**

NWFR is at a financial crossroads. Service calls in our growing district have significantly increased over the last several years. In 2020, the agency responded to 3,679 calls for service—over 52% more than in 2011. Even with careful resource management and firefighters foregoing salary increases in recent years, our current service levels cannot be maintained without additional funding.

**NWFR has not asked voters for a levy rate increase in 12 years.**

**What is a levy lid lift?**

Voter approved statewide initiative (I-747) placed a limit (or “lid”) of 1% (plus the value of new construction) on how much property tax revenues collected by a jurisdiction can grow each year unless voters approve an increase.

At the August 3 primary election, NWFR is asking our voters to “lift the lid” to provide adequate funds to maintain and enhance current levels of fire and emergency medical service.

**What will the fire levy lid lift fund?**

Prop. 2021-3 has been proposed to enhance service levels and response times and improve response reliability. If the measure is approved, NWFR intends to utilize funds for the following purposes:

- **Add four battalion chiefs:** A fire industry standard position that manages crew responses, especially critical in complex incidents.
- **Add four firefighters to staff a peak-hour transport unit:** Responding to significant increase in the number of 911 calls, additional personnel will increase our ability to transport residents during peak times when NWFR is receiving multiple calls in both populated and rural areas.
- **Replace aging fire engines, a ladder truck, water tenders (to bring water to areas not served by municipal water systems) and firefighter equipment:** Most of NWFR’s vehicles which are critical for 911 response have exceeded their planned useful lives.

## About Prop. 2021-3: The Fire Levy Lid Lift

*continued from pg. 1*

*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*

*Family Additions*

*Name changes*

### How will the fire levy lid lift impact what I pay for fire and emergency medical response services?

If Prop. 2021-3 is approved, NWFR's fire levy will be raised from \$1.15 per \$1,000 of assessed value (AV) in 2021, to \$1.45 beginning in 2022. The owner of a \$400,000 home would pay approximately \$10.13 more a month. A \$600,000 homeowner would pay about \$15.10 a month more.

Assessed property value	Annual cost at current levy rate of \$1.15/\$1,000 AV	Annual cost at proposed levy rate of \$1.45/\$1,000 AV	Increased cost if lid lift were in place in 2021
\$400,000	\$458.40	\$580.00	\$121.60/year or <b>\$10.13/month</b>
\$600,000	\$687.60	\$870.00	\$182.40/year or <b>\$15.20/month</b>

Standard exemptions apply, including low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

### What happens if the fire levy lid lift is not approved?

Current fire and emergency medical services levels cannot be maintained, and replacement of aging vehicles is not possible with existing revenues. NWFR will have to address budget gaps by seeking additional property taxes and/or changing how services are delivered.

### Are other Whatcom County Fire Districts asking their voters for additional funds?

Yes, to address similar financial challenges, several of our neighboring fire districts in Whatcom County have proposed comparable levy lid lift ballot measures on the ballot at the August 3 election.

NWFR provides fire and emergency medical services to Whatcom County Fire District 4 and they are also seeking voter approval of a levy lid lift (also \$1.45 per 1,000 assessed value) at the August election. NWFR and District 4 are also exploring the possibility of a Regional Fire Authority—a special purpose district established by voters—to capture economies of scale and provide a more streamlined governance structure.

### When is election day? How can I vote?

The primary election day is August 3. Ballots are mailed July 14. For election information visit <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1574/Elections>.

### How can I learn more about the fire levy lid lift?

Please visit [www.nwfrs.net](http://www.nwfrs.net), call 360-318-9933 or email [info@nwfrs.com](mailto:info@nwfrs.com).



# VOTE Aug. 3, 2021

# Fireworks Safety



Summer is synonymous with barbecues, parades, and fireworks. The National Safety Council advises everyone to enjoy fireworks at public displays conducted by professionals and not use any fireworks at home. They may be legal, but they are not safe.

Each year an average of 10,000 people are injured badly enough to require medical treatment after fireworks-related incidents. Over two-thirds (67%) of injuries take place from June 16 to July 16. And while the majority of these incidents are due to amateurs attempting to use professional-grade, homemade, or other illegal fireworks or explosives, an estimated 1,200 injuries were from less powerful devices like small firecrackers and sparklers.

Additionally, fireworks start an average of 18,500 fires each year, including 1,300 structure fires and 300 vehicle fires.

If consumer fireworks are legal to buy where you live, and you choose to use them, be sure to follow these safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands
- Never light them indoors
- Only use them away from people, houses, and flammable material
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person
- Only light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting
- Never ignite devices in a container
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire
- Never use illegal fireworks



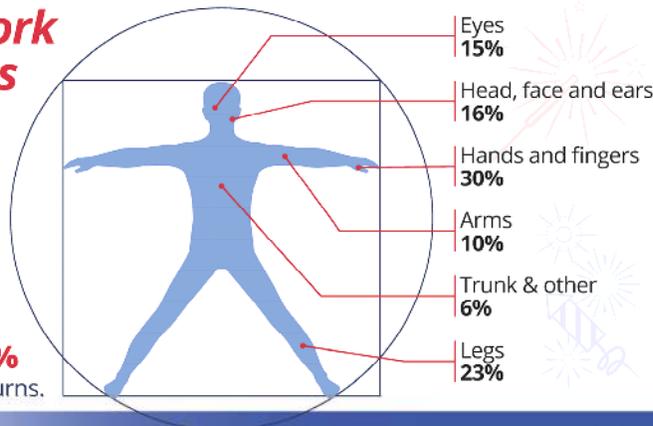
Fireworks sales and discharge laws differ in the County and each incorporated city in Whatcom County. Please contact each respective city's fire official for information on fireworks within those jurisdictions.

**Wishing everyone a safe fourth of July.**

## Firework Injuries

### Most Injured Body Parts

An estimated **57%** of injuries were burns.



#CelebrateSafely



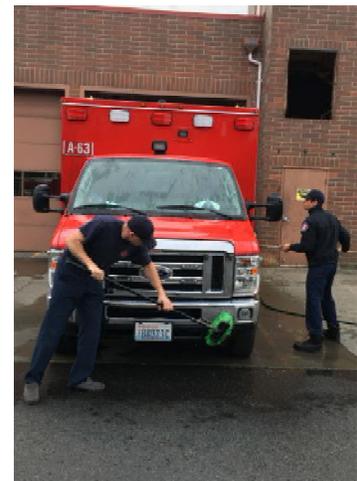
### Events to Celebrate July Birthdays

- 1 — Dylan Witzel
- 7 — Kim Gates
- 11 — Tom Erickson
- 13 — Kenneth Cunningham
- 28 — Dar Kazemi



### NWFR Board Meetings may be conducted via Zoom Meeting/Webinar

Thurs. July 15  
9408 Odell St 61  
Blaine — 1:00 p.m.





1507 E. Badger Rd.  
PO Box 286  
Lynden, WA 98264

Providing quality service for  
a safe community



### CPR / AED Classes 2021

Class will be held at various fire stations around the district. Check out

<https://www.nwfrs.net/resources/classes/> for more information and to reserve your spot.

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



FOR THE SAFETY OF  
EVERYONE IN OUR  
COMMUNITY, ALL CPR  
CLASSES HAVE BEEN  
CANCELLED UNTIL  
FURTHER NOTICE.

WE APOLOGIZE FOR  
ANY INCONVENIENCE

## First Due: Are Millennials Really the Problem?



by Jacob Johnson

Mentoring. It has become the most underrated and forgotten skill on the job today. It's easy for those of us who earned our spot to sit back and say, "That rookie is stupid. Send him home" or "That rookie isn't worth my time. She doesn't love the job." However, have we ever sat back and thought to ourselves that we were the problem? That the millennial, kid, or whatever we call the rookie is what we describe because of us?

The lack of mentoring is killing the fire service today. When we were rookies, those old heads were saying the same thing about us. The difference is that, although they would complain, they then would bring us to the floor and drill us until we couldn't see straight. They would make us smart, make us worth their time, make us a firefighter and make us love the job. There was no choice. They had a job to do as senior members, and they did it. That's the tradition that we must keep alive today—and more than ever, to be honest.

### Shape their career

Think about this: When rookies hit the station, we normally tell them, "You owe us everything. We gave you a job," but has there been any thought that they don't owe us? When they hit the station, they earned their spot. They passed the written exam, the physical assessment, the lie detector

test, the panel interview and the chief interview. They don't owe us anything other than an open mind and hard work. It is we who owe them everything. We must teach the love of the job. Everything has changed in this world, and we must change, too. We must understand that some of these kids are coming to us with no real-life experience. Some never folded the laundry, mowed the front yard or worked a real job. That's not our fault, but it is our problem. It's our job to teach them, to grow them, to show them the ropes and to make them a firefighter.

They are learning in fire schools all over the world that their safety is No. 1 on the fireground. No! We must remind them of their oath, teach them that the citizens come first and train them to be prepared to give everything that they have on scene for the citizens who they serve.

### Path for success

Here is a simple outline that I developed on how to shape the career of rookies:

- Make them proud
- Ask about their life
- Ask them how they learn
- Love them
- Do your damn job!

Following this process, I have seen a difference in how I personally approach a rookie who is hitting the station.

*Make them proud.* On a rookie's first morning, I sit them on the front bumper of the apparatus and explain the significance of it, I explain how sacred that the front bumper is.

*Ask about their life.* Build a relationship. By doing this, your words and teachings will mean more to them over the days

and weeks of their rookie year.

*Ask them how they learn.* If you don't know how to lay things out for them, how can you affectively teach them?

*Love them.* You can't say "brotherhood" and "sisterhood" and not live the concept.

*Do your job!* These rookies depend on us. Their families depend on us. The success of their career depends on us. We have a job to do as senior firefighters, so do it. If these rookies don't want to love the job, then make them love it. Show them how to love it. Get invested in them, so they get invested in the job. Give them their chance, let them shoot their shot and show them the way.

Following these five steps sets you and your rookie on the path for success. Sets your rookie on the path of an outstanding career. The path to retirement years down the road. This is why we are called senior members. This is why the officers and chiefs look to us. After all, mentoring is why we are who we are today!

Every rookie is owed the opportunity to have a love affair with the job.

Jacob Johnson will present "Are Millennials Really the Problem?" at Firehouse Expo. For more information, visit [firehouseexpo.com](http://firehouseexpo.com).

# FIREHOUSE