



Whatcom County Fire District 21 (NWFR) Levy Lid Information

North Whatcom Fire & Rescue

P.O. Box 286

Lynden, WA 98264

Phone: 360-318-9933

For details contact: Jason Van der Veen

Fire Chief

Phone: 360-318-9933

Email: jvanderveen@nwfrs.com

PRESS RELEASE

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WHATCOM COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 21 ANNOUNCES LEVY LID LIFT PROPOSITION ON AUGUST 4, 2026 BALLOT

Whatcom County Fire District 21 has placed a levy lid lift proposition before voters on the August 4, 2026, primary ballot. If approved, the measure would adjust the district's current property tax levy to a higher rate to support fire and emergency medical services.

Under Washington State law, fire districts can only increase their regular property tax revenue by one percent per year, excluding new construction. Over time, this cap can lower their purchasing power due to inflation, rising operational costs, and increasing service demands.

Voters last approved a levy rate of \$1.37 per \$1,000 of assessed value in 2006. Due to levy rate compression, the current rate has dropped to approximately \$0.77 per \$1,000 of assessed value. During that same period, the district has experienced changes in population, call volume, and the complexity of emergency response.

Fire District 21 responds to fire, medical, and other emergency incidents throughout northwest Whatcom County. As call volume grows, it becomes more common for multiple incidents to happen simultaneously. In these cases, resources may be dispatched from various parts of the district or supplemented through mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions.

Use of Levy Lid Lift Funding

If approved, revenue from the levy lid lift would be used to fund district operations, including:

- Staffing fire stations, including consideration of expanded 24-hour coverage at additional locations
- Hiring and retaining personnel to meet service demand
- Replacing and maintaining equipment and apparatus
- Maintaining facilities and supporting required training and safety standards

Estimated Property Tax Impact

If approved, the proposed levy lid lift would impact the property tax rate collected in 2027. For example, a home valued at \$500,000 would see an estimated increase from about \$385 to \$600 in 2027, which amounts to roughly \$215 for that year, or about \$18 per month.

After the initial adjustment in 2027, the levy would be authorized to increase by up to 3% annually for the next five years, in line with the terms of the ballot measure. Actual future tax amounts may vary depending on assessed property values and the annual levy set by the district.

Fire District 21 offers fire protection and emergency medical services to residents, businesses, and visitors within the district. The levy lid lift proposition enables voters to decide the amount of funding allocated for these services.

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