



Volume 19 Issue 9

Sep, 2026



Feature Stories

- Levy Renewal
- 9-11 Memorial
- Back to School
- August Calls

2026 STATISTICS

Aug 1 — Aug 31

District Average Response Time:

9 min. 36 sec.

Responses by Type:

Fire: 30

EMS: 336

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

Whatcom County Fire District 21 (NWFR)

“Providing Quality Service for a Safe Community”

Voters Approve Levy Lid Renewal:

What It Means for Fire District 21



by Chief Van der Veen

Thank you, Whatcom County Fire District 21 residents and business owners. Voters recently approved the district's levy lid renewal, and that decision will directly shape the emergency services available to our community for years to come.

Why This Matters

Over the past two decades, our population and call volume have grown substantially, while state law has capped annual property tax growth at 1%, far below inflation and rising operational costs. The approved renewal closes that gap, allowing the district to keep pace with the community it serves.

What Changes for Residents

With the levy renewed, Fire District 21 can move forward on several fronts that directly affect how quickly and reliably help arrives:

***Replacing Apparatus and Equipment:** Nearly half of our current fleet is beyond the National Fire Protection Association's recommended service life. Aging engines and ambulances are more likely to break down, and equipment out of service reduces the number of available units when calls come in. Levy funding allows the district to replace and upgrade aging apparatus and gear on a more sustainable schedule, keeping equipment and the firefighters who depend on it reliable and safe.

***Staffing Station 62 in Semiahmoo:** The district will extend 24/7 staffing to the Semiahmoo station. With only one primary response unit per station, overlapping calls can mean a more distant unit responds or a mutual-aid request. Adding round-the-clock staffing at Station 62 shortens travel distances in that area and gives the district another available unit when other stations are already

committed without reducing staffing anywhere else.

***Addressing Station 63 in Birch Bay:** Station 63 has been identified as a priority for improvement. Career stations operate as 24-hour workplaces where firefighters live, sleep, and recover between calls. Aging building systems can affect both readiness and safety. The district has not yet decided whether the path forward will be a full replacement or a remodel; that decision, along with a timeline, will be determined as planning progresses. We'll share updates with the community as they become available.

Accountability You Can Count On

Levy revenue stays within the community, directly supporting Fire District 21 operations and services. The Washington State Auditor conducts an independent audit every two years, with the results available to anyone who wants to see them.

Looking Ahead

Approving the levy renewal allows Fire District 21 to maintain, and in places like

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North Whatcom
Fire and Rescue
welcomes suggestions
for upcoming
newsletters. Please
submit your ideas or
suggestions to
info@nwfrs.com



Levy Lid Renewal cont.

continued from pg. 1

Semiahmoo, improve the emergency response our residents and businesses rely on. It supports the firefighter/EMTs who answer

the call, the equipment they depend on, and the facilities where they prepare to serve.

We're grateful to this community for its continued support and

trust in Fire District 21. Questions about how levy funds are used are always welcome. You can reach us at 360-318-9933 or via our website.



For more information about the event visit: <https://911nwmemorial.com/>

Back to School Safety Tips Reminders



A message from DFM Joel Nielsen



As our youngsters begin a new school year, please share the below safety tips with them.

School Zone Driving Safety Tips

- Be on the lookout for school zone signals and ALWAYS obey the speed limits.
 - When entering a school zone, be sure to slow down and obey all traffic laws.
 - Watch out for school crossing guards and obey their signals.
 - Never change lanes or pass other vehicles while driving in a school zone.
 - Never make U-Turns while driving in a school zone.
- Avoid using a cell phone while driving in a school zone.



Riding Your Bike to School

- Check with the school to make sure your child is allowed to ride their bicycle to school. Some schools do not allow students to ride bicycles to school until they reach a specific grade.
- Make sure your child always wears a bicycle helmet! Failure to wear one could result in a traffic citation. Furthermore, in the event of an accident, helmets reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent.
- Obey the rules of the road; the rules are the same for all vehicles, including bicycles.
- Always stay on the right-hand side of the road and ride in the same direction as traffic.
- Choose the safest route between home and school and practice it with children until they can demonstrate traffic safety awareness.
- If possible, try to ride with someone else. There is safety in numbers.

Walking to School

- Use the same route every day and never use shortcuts.
- Always use public sidewalks and streets when walking to school.
- Demonstrate traffic safety awareness and pick the safest route between your home and the school and practice walking

it with your children.

- Try and walk to school with other students. There is strength in numbers.
- Teach your children to recognize and obey traffic signals, signs, and pavement markings.
- Only cross streets at designated crosswalks, street corners and traffic-controlled intersections.
- Always look both ways before crossing the street and never enter streets from between obstacles like parked cars, shrubbery, signs, etc.
- Always walk and never run across intersections.
- Avoid talking to strangers. Teach your children to get distance between themselves and anyone who tries to approach or make contact with them.
- If a stranger does approach your child, make sure they know to immediately report the incident to you or a teacher.

Teach your children to never get into a vehicle with anyone, even if they know them, without your permission.



Events to Celebrate September Birthdays

6 – David Brunnemer
9 – Tanner Jansen
9 – Cole Heili
19 – Alex Ojukwu
25 – Rob Mulrooney
28 – George Hargenrader

District 21 (NWFR) Meetings will be conducted in person

Thur. Sep. 17
9408 Odell St 61
Blaine — 10:30 a.m.

District 4 Meetings continue to be conducted via Zoom with quarterly and special in person

Thurs. Sep. 14 (in person)
4142 Britton Loop St 12





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

Providing quality service for
a safe community



CPR / AED Classes 2026

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

Check out
<https://www.nwfrs.net/cpr-course/>
for updated information
about our program, 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.



CPR

September 12
September 22

Bellingham Whatcom..
@BWCFFBF

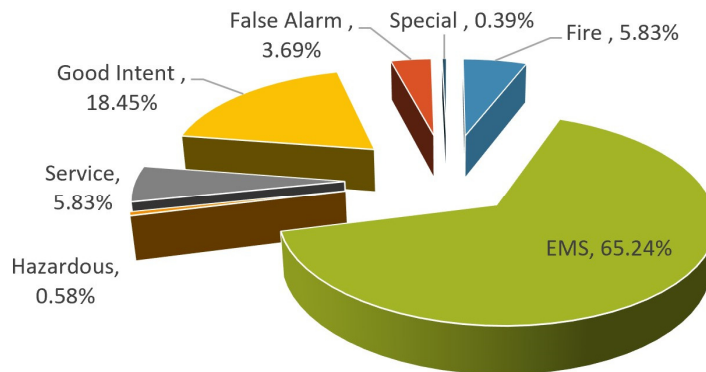


venmo

Benevolent Fund
Donation Link

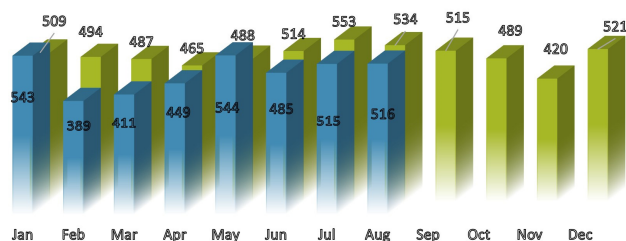
August Calls

Total Calls = 516

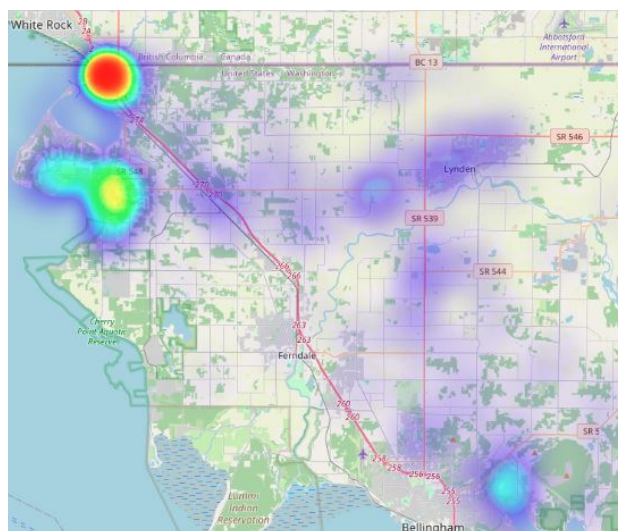


Types of Calls

False Alarms = 19

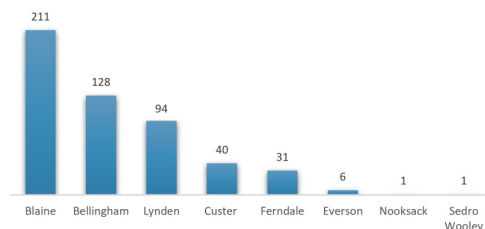


Location of Calls



Average Calls Per Day

17.20



Apparatus Responses

Dispatch Category ● EMS ● Fire



Total Overlapping Calls

210