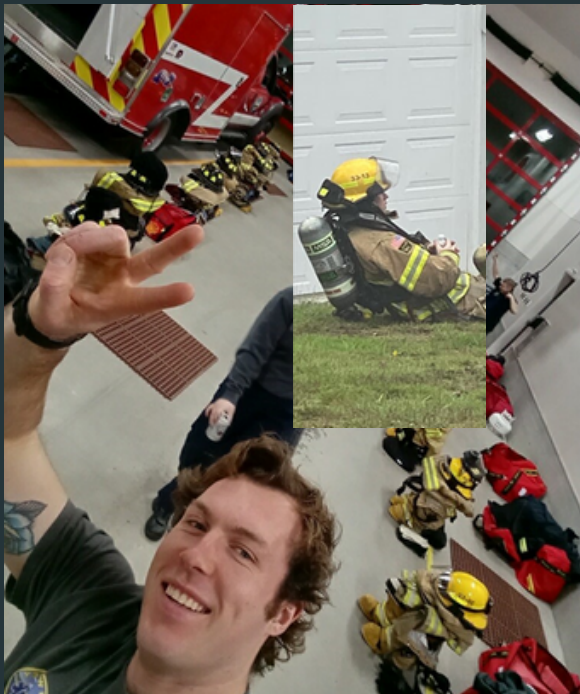


South Whidbey Fire/EMS (SWFE)

August 1, 2023



NEWSLETTER



South Whidbey Fire/EMS members return from North Bend Fire Academy

Welcome back Brian Boyd and Lewis Townsend from the Washington state Fire Academy in North Bend! Over the past few months Lewis attended the Fire Academy as a new recruit learning many important skills involved in firefighting and hazardous materials. Brian worked as a Company Officer at the Fire Academy helping new recruits to hone their firefighting skills and develop into excellent firefighters. This was also an opportunity for Brian to hone his skills as an upcoming company officer. Lewis will graduate from the academy on July 27th and return to South Whidbey Fire EMS for service shortly thereafter.

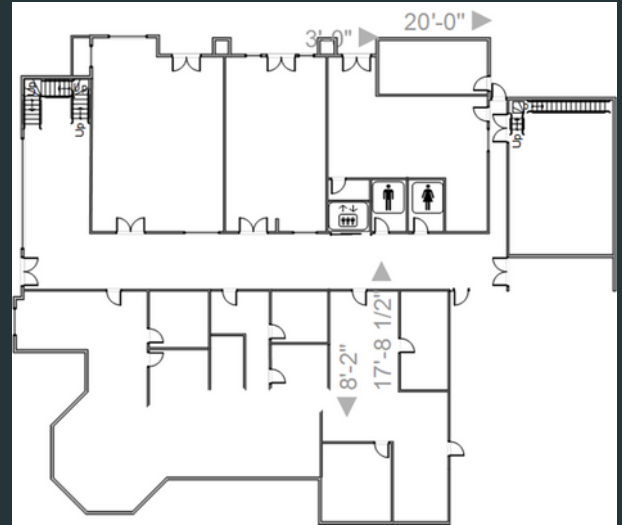
New Deployment Model Starting for SWFE

Starting September first, citizens can expect a quicker response out of the Freeland area. That is the date SWFE will begin to staff the Freeland Station (Station 31 on Cameron Road). Shift dependent, when our duty staffing allows. Meaning, four firefighters on duty two of those firefighters will move from the Bayview Station (Station 36 on Bayview Road) to the Freeland station to staff the fire engine and the ambulance. As the nature of the call dictates. This will improve response times to the busy Freeland area dramatically. We are looking forward to this important change and improved service!



Operations

South Whidbey Fire/EMS will be out in the community more and more as the days go by. One project we are undertaking is to have “preplans” of every commercial or assembly type building. These preplans will be accessible to responders in the event of an emergency call at those locations, and will provide valuable information about the construction and layout of the building, the location of things like utility shut-offs, alarm panels, sprinkler systems, hazards such as propane tanks, etc. They will also have contact information for tenants and owners, so that we can rapidly contact those persons in the event of an emergency. This serves to keep our responders safer, as well as allowing more efficient suppression in the event of a fire.



The second project is inspections of commercial and assembly occupancies. In Island County, the Sheriff is the designated fire marshal, but that office does not have the resources to conduct inspections. So SWFE personnel have been studying and testing to become certified as code enforcement officers. Once we have a cadre of qualified inspectors, we will begin a program of inspections, looking for ways to reduce the risk of fires, and the severity of fires that do occur. When deficiencies are identified, SWFE inspectors will work with the business owners to find the best solution to mitigate the hazard, making the establishment safer for those who work, congregate, or do business there. This will be an educational process, not a punitive one.

If you have questions about either of these programs, feel free to contact Terry Ney, Deputy Chief of Operations and Community Risk Reduction, at 360-321-1533 or ops@swfe.org.

Resources

South Whidbey Fire/EMS (SWFE) two newest BLS Aid units (Medical Emergency Response Vehicle, aka MERV) and ambulance went into service the last week of July thanks to the efforts of maintenance staff and crews. The new Aid 3 ambulance responded on its first EMS call July 29th. Watch for information from Chief Walsh for push-in ceremonies of the District's first ambulance and the newest E-One fire engine that is slated to arrive late this month.



SWFE has contracted with Day Wireless Systems to complete the installation of new vehicle mounted radios to replace the 20-year-old units. This will complete the installation of new FirstNet vehicle mounted hot spots. In the coming months we will begin a multi-year process of replacing our 20-year-old portable radios as well. New radios will allow SWFE responders to communicate with mutual aid agencies in surrounding counties. As well as operate P25 channels in all frequency bands our current radios will not.

The first of the two new MERV's arrived following the unfitting process. The second one is due back in the coming weeks. The remaining four new small utility vehicles are to all be completed by the end of the year. On a side note, the four newest small red Ford Utilities are the district's first hybrid vehicles as we move to conserve fuel and reduce emissions across our entire fleet.

Assessment and review of applications for our vacant Fire Mechanic position concluded. We had a few, very qualified applicants and have a conditional offer with the strongest candidate.

Crews have begun the daunting task of performing our annual fire hose testing at the maintenance facility, between calls and other duties. This takes several months. During the process crews remove, inspect, pressurize, test each and reload every piece of fire hose SWFE owns. We have enough hose on our fire apparatus to reach from the Clinton Ferry to Freeland. Most hose being 50 feet long, a significant feat required annually by NFPA.

Training

The Island Fire Academy has ended and we had four great graduates. The graduation was held at the Coupeville Performing Arts Center. Captain Tom Gideon and Lieutenant Jon Gabelein assisted with the color guard and did a great job! When you see Firefighters Nina Holmstrom, Cory Jennings, Traci Haynie and Riley Pomeroy, please congratulate them for the great job they did during the academy.

The state fire academy finishes soon and graduation will be on July 27, Firefighter/EMT Brian Boyd is the only Company Officer at the academy and Firefighter Lewis Townsend will be graduating from the academy as a Recruit. If you would like to attend please respond to the invitation email. FF/EMT Robbie Husom will be attending State Fire Academy 23-03 as the Academy Company Officer.

With the transition from Spring to Summer and the closing of the fire academies, South Whidbey Fire/EMS is shifting focus to the Emergency Medical technician (EMT) academy. Division Chief (DC) Dilley is working on finalizing paperwork for the academy. It will start in September. The EMT academy will be a little different this year, days of the class will be Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. If you are interested in assisting please let DC Dilley know.

Full-time Lieutenant's and Acting in Charge (AIC's) will be attending an online leadership academy through TEEX coming up in September. This is a great opportunity and is training that will have our Company Officers engaging with other leaders online through the country.

Keep up the great work everyone and thank you for all that everyone does!

Photo from recent live burn

Speaking of AMAZING volunteer members, meet one of our own. Most may know him, the few who don't – should!

Meet Jerry Beck:

Jerry has served the communities he has lived in for a great deal of his adult life. He currently serves as Captain of our Clinton Station (Station 32). He has been a member of South Whidbey Fire/EMS proudly serving 25 years, and counting!

Personal Interests: he likes to use a Mill and Lathe for projects. He said "it's something I do when I need to get away from my "normal life", no phone, no pager, no watch, no distractions. It's me time in there. I do not do it often enough as I should or want, but I'm working towards that."



We encourage anyone interested in becoming one of our AMAZING volunteer core members, to visit our website: <https://www.swfe.org/join-our-team>. Training is provided free of charge to any community member interested! South Whidbey Fire/EMS welcomes all applicants who will be considered regardless of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, age (over 40), pregnancy, marital status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identification, sexual orientation, gender identity or status as an honorably discharged veteran, or any other class protected by federal, state, or local law. Equal access to the hiring process, services, and employment is available to all persons. Applicants requiring accommodations to the application and/or interview process should email: operations@swfe.org

Questions, comments,
want to know more?



Please be sure and check
out our website: swfe.org

or

info@swfe.org

or

(360) 321-1533

any of these options will
put you in touch with the
right person!