

South Whidbey Fire/EMS (SWFE)  
October, 2023



# NEWSLETTER

On October the 20th at 10:00 a.m. South Whidbey Fire/EMS members had the honor of conducting a “push in” ceremony for our two newest fire and ems vehicles. The vehicles were a 2017 Braun Ambulance and a 2023 E-One fire engine!

The fire engine will be called Engine 3 and will respond out of our Bayview station 36, with 24-hour staffing. This engine is the first new engine South Whidbey has put in service since 2012. This engine replaces a 1996 Darley Fire engine that was in service for 27 years.

The name of the ceremony “push in”, goes back to the 17th century when firefighters had hand drawn engines which had to be pushed back into the station. The push in ceremony was conducted when new fire engines and other vehicles were put into service.

Commissioner Noblet and Chief Walsh gave brief addresses to the crowd giving special appreciation to the citizens for funding the new engine through the regular tax levy. Chaplain Rob Hinkelman gave a wonderful invocation at the ceremony.



Join us for Trunk or Treat at the Fire Station!



Saturday, Oct. 28th 5-8pm  
5579 Bayview Road, Langley, WA 98260

Bring the family for some fun and treats. Walk around, meet the Firefighter/EMT's and vote on the best trunk!

Costumes welcomed!



[www.swfe.org](http://www.swfe.org)

# Know what to do if you see a downed power line

## Avoid touching or approaching a fallen power line



**Downed power lines are dangerous. Never touch them. For safety's sake, always assume that a fallen power line is live, and follow these guidelines:**

- Avoid touching the downed line with your hand or an object, such as a stick, broom or pole.
- Avoid touching anything, such as a car, object or equipment, or anyone who is in contact with a fallen power line.
- Keep children and pets away from fallen electric lines.
- Avoid driving over a fallen power line.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately to report a fallen power line.

**Stay safe if a fallen power line touches your car. If your vehicle comes in contact with a downed power line, follow these safety rules:**

- Stay inside your car. The ground around your car may be energized.
- Sound the horn, roll down your window and call for help.
- Warn others to stay away. Anyone who touches the equipment or ground around your car can be injured.
- Use your mobile phone to call 9-1-1.
- Wait until the fire department, police or PSE workers tell you it's safe to get out of your car before exiting the vehicle.

## Follow these safety tips when using balloons and toys around power lines:

- Ensure that helium-filled metallic balloons are tied to weights heavy enough to prevent them from floating into power lines.
- Use metallic balloons, kites and remote-control toys away from overhead electric lines to avoid the potential for power outages, fires and serious injuries.
- Contact PSE immediately at 1-888-225-5773 if a balloon or toy is caught in a power line. Never attempt to retrieve an object that is on or near a power line.

## Look up and live

Remember these important safety tips for overhead power lines:

- Look up before lifting ladders and other long-handled tools to avoid accidental contact with electric lines.
- Stay away from fallen or dangling power lines. Don't touch the lines. Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Contact PSE at 1-888-225-5773 to report tree branches or limbs near power lines. Their tree-trimming crews are qualified to work around high-voltage lines, and can cut the limbs for you. Never attempt to do the trimming yourself.



<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/turkey-fryer-fire-safety-infographic.pdf>

## Training Updates

South Whidbey Fire EMS has had many opportunities in the last month and a half to test out new extrication equipment. There have been representatives from Genesis, Holmatro and Hurst demonstrating and training members of SWFE. This has led to a head to head testing and demonstration and training of Holmatro and Hurst tools. There are currently placeholders in the budget to purchase new extrication equipment in next year's budget!



With the changing season comes a new academy. With the change from Summer to Fall means it is EMT academy. The academy has almost completed the first module of training. There are eight members of SWFE completing the academy and they are doing a great job!

Our Lieutenants, AIC and career members that are about to test for AIC and LT are currently engaged in an interactive leadership course through TEEX, with various other agencies throughout the United States.

Calm the Chaos will begin to roll out with training in December. Calm the Chaos was born out of Blue Card and really sets the stage for getting back to the basics of incident scene management. Please be on the lookout for the training dates and times! Thank you for all the hard work and training that all members complete.

# SOUTH WHIDBEY FIRE/EMS WINTER PREPAREDNESS OPEN HOUSE



**12 NOV 2023**

**1-4PM**

**GOOD CHEER FOOD DRIVE**



**ROAD  
CONDITIONS  
CAR SEAT  
SAFETY**



**TREES  
DOWN**



**SMOKE  
DETECTORS**

**CPR**



**5579 BAYVIEW RD, LANGLEY**

# Let's talk car seat safety!



Yes, autumn is here and it's time to enjoy wrapping up in a blanket, but not in a car seat. For proper harnessing, strap first then blanket on top. Reminder: No puffy coats under the harness.

## 3 most common car seat use mistakes:

- Loose installation.
- Tether not used.
- Harness straps too loose.



Schedule a free car seat check today, email [carseats@swfe.org](mailto:carseats@swfe.org)

Data provided by AAA Mountain West Group and the National Safety Council, 2022

## **Lithium batteries aren't allowed in landfills, many still make it into the garbage!**

Exploding lithium-ion batteries are leading to more fires in landfills and recycling centers, prompting action from state and local governments.

Tim Brownell, director of a county solid waste disposal system in the Pacific Northwest, said his county's landfill has seen 21 lithium-related fires in the past three months. Staff went from seeing battery fires once a month to multiple times a week. "(Lithium batteries) are everywhere in the system," Brownell said. "It's a public safety concern and it's a concern for the infrastructure that are taxpayer investments."

Lithium batteries can be found in a variety of household objects, ranging from cars to power tools and from e-bikes to birthday cards that play music when opened. When run over by tractors or crushed in a trash compactor, they have the potential to explode and catch fire. Because of this, the batteries are considered hazardous and aren't allowed in the landfill. Many end up there anyway. Brownell said many people simply don't know that they shouldn't throw the batteries in the garbage.

In some cases, it's leading to potentially dangerous situations. On multiple occasions, garbage trucks have arrived at the landfill with a fire smoldering in the back, Brownell said. It's unclear how many injuries these types of fires have caused.

As for which objects are causing fires, Brownell has seen cellphones, tablets and large batteries found in e-bikes and cars. Those larger ones are of particular concern because the fires are bigger. "You might get flames that are three or four feet up in the air," Brownell said. "Once you get flames like that, you start to get concerned about it starting to catch the adjacent materials around it."

Battery fires aren't a new issue. The federal Environmental Protection Agency issued a report in 2021 analyzing the impact of these batteries on fires in waste management facilities. The agency found 245 separate fires across 28 states, some of which led to entire buildings burning down. Recycling centers were at particular risk of fire damage.

The report mentioned Pacific Coast Shredding in Vancouver, Washington, which reported multiple lithium fires. In 2019, a car went through an automobile shredder and caught fire, causing tens of thousands of dollars in damage.

The problem appears to be worsening, which Brownell said could be related to lithium batteries appearing more widely in the marketplace. Reuters reported earlier this year that demand for lithium batteries is on the rise, with the market in the U.S. expected to rise six times by 2030. "If we're going to speak publicly about it, we have to get a better sense of how often it is happening," Brownell said. Brownell said people looking to throw away lithium batteries should bring them directly to the landfill, where operators can discard them properly. He said he hopes, in the future, "people who put (lithium batteries) into the marketplace bear some of the responsibility" for the fires.



Speaking of AMAZING volunteer members, meet one of our own. Many may know her, if you don't introduce yourself!

Meet Pat McMahon:

Pat joined South Whidbey Fire/EMS in 2008 as an EMT. She quickly became a go to resource and mentor for seasoned and new members. She has been the driving force behind our Health and Wellness Team. She sends interesting reading and ideas to further all of us towards a healthier tomorrow. This month Pat shared this link about ice baths. : [https://www.ems1.com/ems-products/fitness-mental-health-wellness/articles/ice-bath-therapy-for-first-responders-physical-and-mental-benefits-of-cold-water-xkO9egFskHsTU5Sp/?utm\\_source=EMS1&utm\\_campaign=d08d9b40d8-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIN\\_2023\\_08\\_29\\_03\\_49&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_13aebf8568-d2cc857995-%5BLIST\\_EMAIL\\_ID%5D](https://www.ems1.com/ems-products/fitness-mental-health-wellness/articles/ice-bath-therapy-for-first-responders-physical-and-mental-benefits-of-cold-water-xkO9egFskHsTU5Sp/?utm_source=EMS1&utm_campaign=d08d9b40d8-EMAIL_CAMPAIN_2023_08_29_03_49&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_13aebf8568-d2cc857995-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D)



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](mailto:operations@swfe.org)

[www.swfe.org](http://www.swfe.org)

Questions, comments, want to know more?

Please be sure and check out

our website: [swfe.org](http://swfe.org)

or

[info@swfe.org](mailto:info@swfe.org)

or

(360) 321-1533

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



[www.swfe.org](http://www.swfe.org)