

Chief's Corner

By Fire Chief Mike Carnes



Thank you for supporting East County Fire and Rescue. We serve 10,000 people over 60 square miles in the unincorporated areas surrounding the Cities of Camas and Washougal. We are a small rural fire district.

We staff two of our four fire stations 24/7/365. What is happening in your fire district? First, we have successfully managed to operate the fire district through the unprecedented restrictions that were established by the CDC so that we could provide safe fire service to the fire district residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenge was to not only protect our patients, but also protect our first responders and their families. I am proud to say that while in the performance of their job at ECFR not one of our firefighters, to date, have contracted the Covid-19 virus while performing their job.

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We were able to complete the sale of one of our unstaffed fire stations to the City of Washougal. The Board of Commissioners determined that this station located in the City of Washougal no longer served a need in our future strategic planning. The funds from the sale were used to pay off a bond that the district purchased back in 2007. This early payoff will save the fire district about \$95,000 in interest payments.

Our fire district is working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in preparing for wildland fire season. We are sharing Station 93 with them so they can locate a DNR wildland fire engine there during the summer months. Station 93 is unstaffed and is located on NE 312th Ave in the Sunnyside area. These are just a few of the many things that are happening in the district. Please feel free to send questions or comments to me at mcarnes@ecfr.us

ECFR to use Squads for EMS Calls

"East County Fire and Rescue decides to leave the large fire engines at the station on routine EMS calls and instead respond in the smaller squads."



East County Fire and Rescue has changed its operations and moved to responding with smaller apparatus on medical calls in the fire district. Crews responded to 1,095 calls in 2020. Medical calls are about 80 percent of the total calls and do not require an engine response. Not only are the smaller squad vehicles much less expensive to replace than a fire engine, they will also help avoid wear-and-tear on the District's larger fire apparatus.

Prepare for Wildland Fires Now

Our dry spring will likely contribute to an early and troublesome fire season this year.

Our fire district is prepared to save lives and property. There are a few things you can do to help minimize any loss from wildland fires.

Defensible space could be the most valuable tool in protecting your home from wildland fire. In essence, this is the buffer between your home and the wildland that will either stop a fire or slow it to the extent that firefighters can save your home.

At one time 30 feet of defensible “green” space was the rule of thumb. In some areas, that space increases to 100 or 150 feet. The best judge of the amount of space required is your fire department. Please call the station to speak with a firefighter or to schedule an appointment for a site visit and evaluation. 360-834-4908

Department of Ecology issues Drought Advisory!

A Drought Advisory is in effect as of May 24, 2021 in certain areas of Washington State. Clark County is one of those areas. What this means is that we are expected to receive less than 75% of normal water supply.

The NOAA Northwest River forecast Center April through September streamflow forecast are less than 40-60% of normal in southwest Washington.

