

East County Fire and Rescue

News and Information for the Residents of East Clark County



www.ecfr.us

ECFR Struggles to Maintain Staffing

East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR) is facing an ongoing challenge in maintaining staffing. Staffing shortages at ECFR have hit the district hard this year, resulting in reduced coverage and the occasional closure of one of its two fire stations with on-duty staffing. Despite these challenges, the district is doing everything it can to provide the best coverage we can with the resources we have. We endeavor to maintain on duty staffing of four personnel with two at Station 91 on NE 267th Avenue, and two at Station 94 on SE 352nd Avenue. When staffing is insufficient, we are forced to temporarily close Station 94 on the east side of the district.



Fire and rescue services in East County were originally provided by volunteers. Over time, as volunteer staffing decreased, the district shifted to a combination of full- and part-time on-duty staffing to provide on-duty coverage.

Use of part-time firefighters was initially a cost effective, and fiscally prudent approach to improving service delivery to East County. However, the district's part-time firefighters are commonly hired by larger fire and rescue agencies such as Vancouver and Clark County Fire District 6 to be full-time firefighters, resulting in constant turnover. Over the last year there has been a significant increase in entry level and lateral entry full-time firefighter hiring throughout the region. This has impacted East County Fire and Rescue by making it impossible to maintain part-time firefighter staffing. The district has seen seven part-time firefighters hired by other agencies within the last six months (over 100% turnover). The district currently has a single part-time firefighter on the roster. In addition, the district has had three full-time members accept lateral entry positions with larger agencies providing higher pay and increased opportunity for advancement.

Turnover and vacant positions have impacted the district in several ways. We have attempted to maintain staffing using overtime, but this has resulted in increased expense and excessive work hours have adversely impacted our employees and their families.

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East County Fire and Rescue
600 NE 267th Avenue
Camas, WA 98607
(360) 834-4908

Protect Your Family!

Regardless of the age of your home, East County Fire and Rescue will check your smoke alarms, install smoke alarms if you do not have them, and help you develop a plan to minimize your risk from fire or injury by conducting a home safety survey.

You can request a home safety survey by calling us at (360) 834-4908.

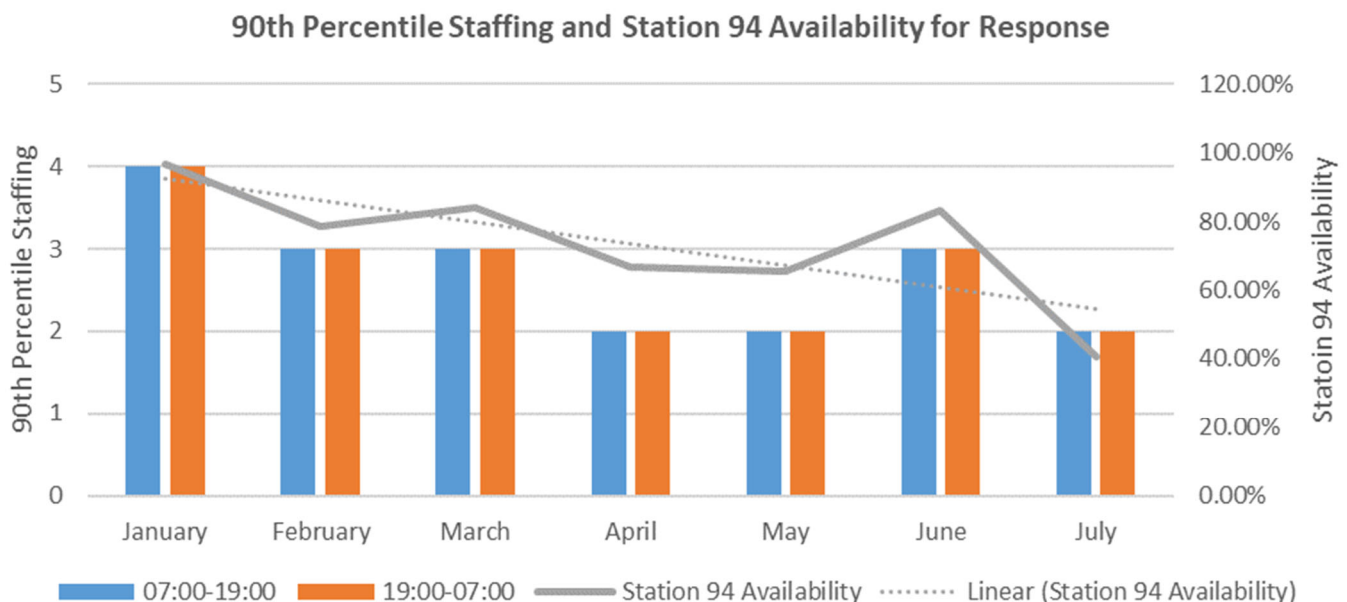


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This has resulted in an inability to fill all vacant shifts, necessitating temporary closure of one of the fire district's fire stations on a day to day basis. When staffing falls below four personnel, Station 94 located on SE 352nd is closed. Station 94 was selected for closure when there is insufficient staffing based on the distribution of calls for service within the district. Seventy percent of calls for service occur in areas of the community served by Station 91 while thirty percent occur in Station 94's response area.

In some cases, Station 94 is closed from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and in other cases the station is closed for a full 24-hour shift. How does this impact our ability to serve the community? When this station is closed, high priority calls receive initial response from Camas Washougal Fire Department Station 43 in downtown Washougal and for lower priority calls, ECFR personnel respond from Station 91 on NE 267th Avenue. In both cases, response time is dramatically increased. Unfortunately lack of staffing has increased during the first six months of the year, resulting in reduced 90th percentile staffing (staffing level available 90% of the time) and availability of response from Station 94.



The district has taken interim steps to improve shift staffing and availability of response from Station 94 by hiring an additional full-time firefighter to replace two of the vacant part-time positions. This will reduce the number of vacant shifts and increase the district's ability to maintain its minimal level of staffing. In addition, the district aggressively recruited to fill full-time firefighter vacancies, hiring two of our part-time staff and two external candidates to minimize impact from full-time turnover.

ECFR has reenergized its volunteer program, increasing volunteer staffing from four to eighteen in the first six months of 2023. However, these new members will be in training for the next year and one of them have already been hired as full-time firefighters by other agencies. Once they have completed training, on-duty volunteers will be used to augment our full- and part-time staffing.

The two greatest challenges facing the district are limited staffing and fiscal resources needed for increased staffing and to maintain the district's apparatus, equipment, and facilities .

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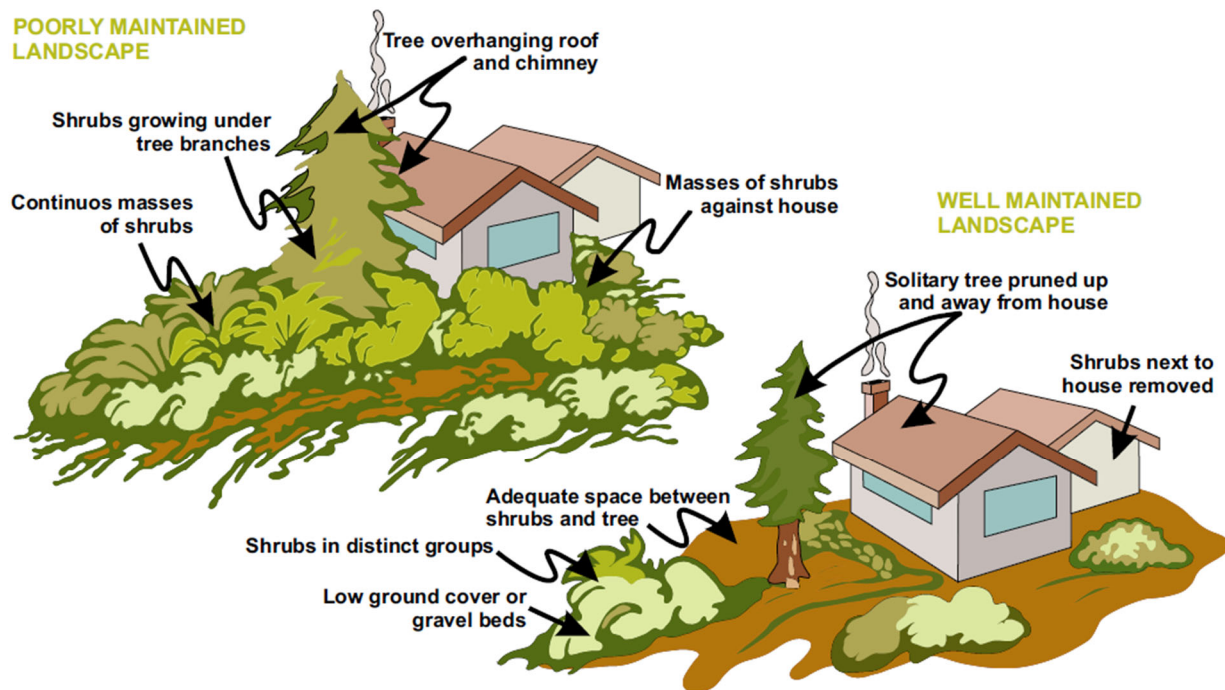
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District staff and the board of fire commissioners are engaged in a comprehensive planning initiative to examine staffing, apparatus and equipment, facilities, and most importantly finance to identify solutions that will allow us to continue to provide effective fire and rescue services to our community.

Who Provides Your Fire and Rescue Service

Your address may be in Camas, Washougal, or Vancouver, but if you live in an unincorporated area of the county outside the boundaries of these cities, your fire and rescue service is likely provided by a fire district. Fire districts are limited purpose local governments separate from a city, town, or county government. East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR) is a fire district serving southeastern Clark County to the north and east of the cities of Camas and Washougal and to the east of the city of Vancouver. We partner with the Camas Washougal Fire Department (CWFD) to provide emergency medical services to the district, with ECFR providing basic life support first response and CWFD providing advanced life support ambulance service. Other types of fire and rescue response are also a collaborative effort with automatic aid providing initial response from multiple agencies to larger and more resource intensive incidents.



Be Firewise!

In October of 2022, the Nakia Creek Fire brought home the risk of wildland fires in our community. The risk and extent of wildfires in the western United States is growing because of climate change. The wildland fire season is getting longer with fires burning hotter and spreading faster. As more homes are built in the wildland interface, risk to life and property increases.

Reduce your risk from wildland fires. Take action to create defensible space and learn what to do when a wildland fire occurs in our community. We can help! Give us a call at (360) 834-4908 to schedule a free Firewise assessment and/or home safety survey for your home and property.

East County Fire and Rescue
600 NE 267th Avenue
Camas, WA 98607

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Volunteer with ECFR

If you want to help our community, East County Fire and Rescue (ECFR) has great opportunities for you to volunteer! ECFR needs volunteer firefighters, water tender operators, and support services members. No experience is required to join ECFR and train to be a support services member or volunteer firefighter, all training is provided at no expense to you. Our training program provides an immersive experience and opportunity to quickly apply what you have learned.

If you have experience driving a truck or operating other large equipment, we can train you to drive and operate a water tender (a large truck used to supply water for firefighting operations where there are no hydrants).

Give us a call at (360) 834-4908 or visit www.ecfr.us or scan the QR code to the right for more information.



Like us on Facebook for late breaking updates!

Calendar of Events

Open House on August 26, 2023

11:00 am to 2:00 pm at Station 91
600 NE 267th Avenue, Camas, WA

Board of Fire Commissioners Meetings

First and third Tuesdays of every month
6:30 pm at Station 91
600 NE 267th Avenue, Camas, WA



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