

House Calls



NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 9



- Join us for
Demo Day 2026
Saturday, Oct 3
- Hands-Only
CPR Launch
- Ambulance FAQs
- Planning for
the Future



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FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Protecting Our Community and Investing in Our Future

As we reflect on the past several months in our fire district and across our region, it is clear that our community has faced incredibly challenging times, and throughout it all, the firefighters, fire officers, paramedics, and support personnel of District 9 have answered the call every time.

Fires such as Upriver, Old Trails, Autumn Lane, and Fairview have tested our system in ways we have not seen before. These incidents are important reminders that the threats facing our community are real and that the work of a fire district extends far beyond responding to routine calls.

Our mission at Fire District 9 is to protect lives, homes, and businesses; support our neighbors in their most difficult moments; and be prepared when the unexpected happens.

During these historic fires, our personnel worked in difficult and dangerous conditions. They made critical decisions under pressure, protected thousands of homes and property, evacuated residents and visitors, and worked shoulder-to-shoulder with neighboring agencies and emergency partners. In addition, during the first 48 hours of the Spokane Complex Fires, your firefighters responded to an additional 65 calls for service unrelated to the fires, a powerful reflection of their extraordinary commitment to our fire district.



MATTHEW T. VINCI

But the work of being prepared begins well before the emergency call is dispatched.

Our firefighters train continuously, maintain equipment, study buildings and fire behavior, prepare for disasters, and spend countless hours making sure that when someone in our district needs help, we are ready to respond.

Expanding Emergency Medical Services

One of the most significant improvements to emergency services in our community has been the creation of our District 9 ambulance service. The success of this program has exceeded expectations. To date, our ambulance crews have treated and transported more than 1,000 patients.

Behind that number are more than 1,000 individual calls for help. They represent people experiencing medical emergencies, suffering injuries, facing serious illness, or simply needing someone to arrive and help them through a difficult and uncertain moment.

There is another part of this accomplishment that is especially important: District 9 residents will never receive a bill for these ambulance services.

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CONTINUED | FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Having the right personnel, equipment, and infrastructure in place directly affects our ability to deliver the highest level of emergency services

Investing in the System

Fire engines, ladder trucks, water tenders, brush trucks, and other emergency vehicles are highly specialized pieces of equipment. They must perform reliably in some of the most demanding circumstances imaginable. They are also significant financial investments.

Replacing apparatus before it becomes unreliable is not a luxury. It is an essential part of maintaining a dependable emergency response system.

The same is true of our facilities.

Our district has not seen significant improvements to our facilities in more than 30 years. During that time, our community has changed, emergency response demands have increased, technology has evolved, and expectations of the modern fire service have changed dramatically. Yet much of our infrastructure has remained essentially the same.

Our stations are more than buildings. They are the places from which our emergency response system operates and our team lives for 48 hours at a time. They must support modern fire and emergency medical operations, provide healthy and safe environments for our personnel to work and train, and allow us to maintain and deploy the staff and equipment our community depends upon.

After more than three decades without significant facility improvements, it is time to address these needs in a thoughtful, responsible, and comprehensive way.

Supporting the People Who Serve

A modern emergency response system requires enough personnel to safely and effectively handle the incident in front of us while maintaining the ability to respond to the next emergency. As call volume and service expectations grow, we must continually evaluate whether our staffing model provides the level of service our residents deserve and expect.

Our team at Fire District 9 is our greatest asset.

We must recruit, retain, train, and equip them appropriately. The best apparatus and facilities in the world cannot replace the knowledge, experience, courage, and compassion of the people who respond when someone calls for help.

Building on What We Have Accomplished

We have built a strong foundation. Now it is time to build upon it. The challenges we have faced over the past several months have shown us what our people are capable of and how much our community depends upon them. Our responsibility now is to make sure they have the resources and support necessary to meet those challenges for years to come.

I am honored to serve as your fire chief, and I look forward to working with our community as we take the next steps toward a stronger, safer, and more robust Fire District 9.

AMBULANCE FAQs



Are ambulance personnel also firefighters?

Yes, every ambulance is staffed with a Firefighter EMT & Firefighter Paramedic.

Are Fire District 9 ambulances in fire stations?

Yes, all ambulances are housed in fire stations. These locations are data driven to reduce response and transport times.

If I am a resident of Fire District 9, what will it cost me to be transported in a Fire District 9 ambulance?

If a resident of Fire District 9 is transported in a Fire District 9 ambulance, there is NO bill, hidden fee, or additional charges.

How many ambulances does Fire District 9 operate?

We have 4 ambulances in service covering our entire district with the ability to place a 5th in service during high volume times or critical events.

FROM THE COMMISSIONER'S DESK

Planning for Fire District 9's Future: Our Strategic Plan and Propositions 1 and 2

Over the past several issues of House Calls, we have taken a closer look at the services Fire District 9 provides, how those services are funded, and why staffing and equipment matter when you call 911. Those discussions lead naturally to an important question: How do we prepare Fire District 9 to meet the needs of our community in the years ahead?

Earlier this year, we completed a comprehensive Strategic Plan for 2026–2031. Our goal was to take an objective look at where Fire District 9 is today, where our community is headed, and what we need to do to continue providing high-quality emergency services in the years ahead.

Three major themes emerged: protecting lives and property, meeting increasing demands for emergency services while maintaining efficiency, and demonstrating value to our community.

The planning process also made something clear to us as Commissioners: maintaining today's level of service while preparing for tomorrow's needs requires a sustainable long-term funding plan.

One important finding was that Fire District 9 continues to operate efficiently compared with similar agencies. Our operating cost is approximately \$408 per resident, compared with an average of approximately \$422 per resident among the comparable fire agencies reviewed.

However, efficiency alone cannot overcome the financial challenges we have discussed in previous articles. Washington law generally limits annual property tax revenue growth to 1% unless voters approve an increase. At the same time, the costs of staffing, apparatus, equipment, medical supplies, insurance, and virtually everything required to operate a modern fire district have increased at a greater rate.

For those reasons, your Board of Fire Commissioners has placed two measures on the November 3 ballot.

Proposition 1 would restore the district's regular fire levy to 1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value to support ongoing fire and emergency medical services. For the



BRIAN MATHER
FIRE COMMISSIONER

following five years, the measure would allow annual levy revenue increases of up to 6%, while the levy rate itself could not exceed \$1.50 per \$1,000.

Proposition 2 would authorize up to \$70 million in general obligation bonds to address our long-term facility needs. The bond would renovate and improve four existing fire stations, replace an inadequate and outdated station, construct a training and classroom building with public meeting space, and renovate and expand our maintenance and logistics facility. The bonds would have a maximum term of 20 years and would be repaid through an excess property tax levy.

"...maintaining today's level of service while preparing for tomorrow's needs requires a sustainable long-term funding plan."

In 2027 Fire District 9's Maintenance and Operations Levy will come before voters for renewal. If Propositions 1 and 2 are approved, your Board of Fire Commissioners is committed to reducing the M&O levy by \$0.20 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Estimates show that the combined additional cost of Propositions 1 and 2 for a home assessed at \$500,000 would be approximately \$423 in 2027, or \$35.25 per month. In 2028, that additional cost would decrease to approximately \$323 per year, or \$26.92 per month.

As Commissioners, our responsibility is to plan ahead, be transparent about the needs of the district and use the resources entrusted to us wisely. As voters, you ultimately determine whether these measures are the appropriate way to provide the resources necessary to carry out that plan.

I encourage you to learn about Propositions 1 and 2, review our Strategic Plan, ask questions, and make an informed decision on November 3. 



House Calls

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House Calls is a publication of
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**SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 3RD**

Demo Day Hands - Only CPR Launch

*Learn Hands-Only CPR and
become a lifesaver in your
home, workplace, and
community.*

OPEN TO ALL

WHY ATTEND?

- Learn a lifesaving skill
- Learn how to recognize cardiac arrest
- Practice Hands-Only CPR
- Know what to do before help arrives
- Learn directly from District 9 firefighters

Visit scfd9.org
for more Fire District 9 Related Information



JOIN US FOR

DEMO DAY 2026

**October 3rd
2026**

Saturday | 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

- Giveaways
- Live Demonstrations
- Food Vendors
- Family Fun

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE
FOR MORE DISTRICT RELATED INFORMATION**
scfd9.org