



2024 Fire Levy Lid Lift

South Whidbey Fire/EMS is asking voters for a fire levy lid lift in the August primary election to hire more firefighters and improve emergency services.





Do my property taxes increase by the same percent of my home's assessed value?

No. Each year we are allowed to collect a set amount of revenue. State law limits us to that amount plus a small annual increase approved by voters. Our revenue does not increase at the same rate as property values. This means the fire levy rate falls as property values rise to limit our budget to the approved amount each year.

Our fire levy rate has dropped from \$0.95 in 2021 to \$0.81 in 2023 and is no longer adequate to cover costs to provide emergency services.

What will this cost?*

The owner of a \$600,000 home would pay an additional \$19.50 per month.

Where can I find more information?

Learn more at www.swfe.org. Fire Chief Nick Walsh welcomes your questions at 360-321-1533 or chief@swfe.org.

*Homeowners who are 61 years or older and others who meet income and eligibility requirements may qualify for a property tax exemption. Contact the Island County Assessor at 360-679-7366 or online at www.islandcounty.wa.gov/269/Exemptions to see if you qualify.

10,000 visitors and 533 businesses. Like other fire districts across the country, we are struggling to recruit and retain new volunteers to respond to calls.

What will the lid lift fund?

- Two more full-time firefighters per day to respond to fire and EMS calls in 10 minutes or less on average. (Our current response time is 15 minutes on average, which is a concern.)
- Staffing at a third fire station in the southeast part of the district to reduce response times by an average of five minutes.
- Replacement of aging fire engines dating back to the 1990s that have reached the end of their usable lives.

How are we funded?

Our daily operations are funded by a fire levy. In 2021, voters approved a levy rate of \$0.95 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Since then, the rate has dropped to \$0.81.

What will be on my ballot?

We are asking voters for a \$0.39 lid lift, which would reset the fire levy rate to \$1.20 per \$1,000. The measure will appear on the August 6, 2024, primary election ballot.

Why are we asking for this?

Revenue from our fire levy is not enough to cover costs to provide emergency services and pay for critical service improvements. We rely on full-time and volunteer emergency personnel to serve 15,000 residents and another