

FALL 2020

# SOUTH COUNTY SIREN

SERVING SOUTH SNOHOMISH COUNTY • BRIER • EDMONDS  
LYNNWOOD • MOUNTLAKE TERRACE



Firefighters load hose on a fire engine following a drill at Alderwood Mall

**SOUTH COUNTY FIRE**

12425 Meridian Avenue S  
Everett WA 98208



**SERVING SOUTH  
SNOHOMISH COUNTY  
BRIER • EDMONDS  
LYNNWOOD • MOUNTLAKE TERRACE**

PRSRST STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Seattle WA  
Permit #1193

ECRWSS  
Postal Customer

# On the COVER

## Training for fires in taller buildings

Our crews are training for firefighting in taller structures as building heights are on the rise in south Snohomish County.

Throughout the summer, firefighters participated in drills in the parking garage at Alderwood Mall. They used the stairwells to simulate mid-rise and high-rise buildings.

Buildings like these are equipped with standpipe systems, which can deliver water through piping in the stairwell for firefighting operations on each floor. Drilling at the parking garage allowed firefighters to practice hose connections and simulated attacks using standpipe systems.



# A message from the Fire Chief



By Fire Chief Thad Hovis

**W**e are in an unprecedented time for our community, state and nation. The COVID-19 pandemic response has been a top headline, and we want you to know that South County Fire is here when you need us for any emergency. We train to respond to infectious diseases and every other emergency. Your tax dollars have built one of the most advanced emergency response systems in the state, and we are grateful.

In order to maintain your investment, I want to share a proposal for funding emergency services that is fairer for taxpayers. It's called a benefit charge and the proposal will be on the November General Election ballot for voters within the regional fire authority (City of Lynnwood and unincorporated communities of southwest Snohomish County).\*

Under a benefit charge, the fire levy is reduced from \$1.50 to \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The benefit charge is then set based on a property's size and use. For example, single family homes pay less than commercial buildings because it takes fewer resources to defend the smaller structure in a fire.

If approved by voters, more than 95% of property owners would pay less or the same with a benefit charge compared to the traditional fire levy funding model. You can learn more at our website: [www.southsnofire.org/ElectionInfo](http://www.southsnofire.org/ElectionInfo).

COVID-19 makes it challenging to interact with our community outside of emergency calls. I would appreciate opportunities to share information about South County Fire and the benefit charge through a virtual presentation to service organizations, homeowner associations and other community groups. To arrange a presentation for your group, please contact my office at 425-551-1250.

I speak on behalf of all of the employees at South County Fire when I say that it is an honor to serve you. We sincerely appreciate your continued support for emergency services.

*\*This election would not apply to voters within the city limits of Brier, Edmonds and Mountlake Terrace, who are provided emergency services through a contract with their cities.*

**CONNECT WITH US**



@southsnofire



South County Fire

# EMS *in action*

Firefighters work as a team to provide lifesaving care



Rex Pardo continues to recover at home.

Rex Pardo doesn't remember the day his heart and breathing stopped, but his wife Barbara helped fill in the blanks. "They saved his life in the driveway," she said, describing the way firefighters worked together to perform CPR.

It was the afternoon of April 30. Rex was struggling to breathe and experiencing chest pains. Barbara called 911.

Just as firefighters were preparing to take Rex to the hospital, he went into cardiac arrest in the back of the medic unit. Nine firefighters from three fire stations worked as a team to perform high-performance CPR and administer medications to get Rex's heart beating again.

Rex spent three weeks at the hospital — the first week on life support. Family members stayed in touch with Rex by phone and

FaceTime because visitors weren't allowed due to the pandemic. "Every day, we prayed outside the hospital underneath his window," Barbara said.

Rex was discharged May 20 to a rehabilitation facility, where he arrived on a stretcher. After four weeks of physical and occupational therapy, he was able to walk out on his own to continue his recovery at home.

Doctors who treated Rex were not able to determine exactly what caused his cardiac arrest. Rex's heart is healthy. Arm tremors remain as the only residual challenge and he is persevering with a great sense of humor. Specialists told Rex his level of recovery is rare — less than 1% — for patients who survive the total body shutdown and complications he experienced. "I am thankful to God and very grateful for the firefighters' professional performance under pressure that began a lifesaving miracle," Rex said.



Nine firefighters, including paramedics, responded from three fire stations to care for Rex Pardo: Silver Fir Fire Station 13 (top), Hilton Lake Fire Station 12 (above) and Everett Fire Department Fire Station 7 (not pictured).

## ONLINE VIDEO:

[www.southsnofire.org/CPRteam](http://www.southsnofire.org/CPRteam)

See a video of how firefighters work as a team to save a life with high-performance CPR.

## Prevent slips, trips & falls in your home

911 calls for falls increase as more older adults are staying at home during the pandemic

South Snohomish County has seen an increase in slips, trips and falls during the pandemic as older adults are spending more time at home. Over half of all falls take place at home.



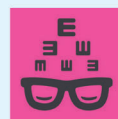
**Inspect your home for fall risks.** Fix simple but serious hazards such as clutter, throw rugs and poor lighting. Add grab bars in the bathroom, a second handrail on stairs and non-slip paint or tape on outdoor steps.



**Talk to your health care provider.** Ask for an assessment of your risk of falling. Share your history of recent slips, trips or falls.



**Regularly review your medications** with your doctor or pharmacist. Make sure side effects aren't increasing your risk of falling. Take medications only as prescribed.



**Get your vision and hearing checked** annually and update your eyeglasses. Your eyes and ears are key to keeping you on your feet.

### Help for older adults & concerned loved ones

The South County Fire falls prevention team can identify steps you can take and changes you can make to reduce the risk of falling. Contact [falls@southsnofire.org](mailto:falls@southsnofire.org), 425-551-1266.

# ONLINE classes & activities

Since we can't meet in person during the pandemic, we're offering community classes and programs online.

**Learn more and register:**

[www.southsnofire.org/education](http://www.southsnofire.org/education)

## Free classes

Register in advance at our website. Classes are offered via Zoom teleconferencing. A smart phone, tablet or computer with internet access is required. Group classes may also be requested.



**CAR SEAT AWARENESS:** Learn how to properly use your car seat to protect your child from birth to the adult seat belt. *First Wednesday of the month, offered at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m.*



**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR FAMILIES:** Learn how to prepare and care for your family in a disaster in this one-hour training. *Third Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m.*



**ACT FIRST AID:** In one hour, learn three skills to save a life: Antidote for opioid overdose, CPR for sudden cardiac arrest and Tourniquet for bleeding control. *Third Wednesday of the month, offered at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m.*

## NEW! Starting in October Home & Fire Safety Class



Most fires can be prevented. Learn how you can protect your family and prevent fires in your home.

*Starting in October, second Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m.*

- **Top causes of fire and safety tips** to prevent them in your home.
- **Placement and maintenance of safety devices** to protect you and your family.
- **Steps to creating a home fire escape plan.**
- **What to do if a fire occurs in your home.**



## For kids and families

**ONLINE KIDS FIRE CAMP:** Five days of fun safety activities for the whole family! Go at your own pace. This free camp includes hands-on activities and video messages from firefighters. Register at [www.southsnofire.org/firecamp](http://www.southsnofire.org/firecamp).

**ONLINE KIDS FIRE ACADEMY:** More online safety activities for kids are available at [www.southsnofire.org/kidsacademy](http://www.southsnofire.org/kidsacademy).

## Virtual open houses

Check out these virtual open house videos at [www.southsnofire.org/openhouse](http://www.southsnofire.org/openhouse).

**NEIGHBORHOOD NIGHT OPEN HOUSE:** Video tours of a fire engine, a medic unit and the fire/rescue boat in Edmonds.



*In the Neighborhood Night Online video, firefighters at Maplewood Fire Station 16 demonstrate how they use a thermal imaging camera to see through smoke and find people in a burning building.*

**EMS OPEN HOUSE:** Tour a medic unit, meet a community paramedic, see how firefighters train for medical emergencies and learn how firefighters work as a team to save lives with high-performance CPR.



*Firefighters train for medical emergencies using a SIMMAN. (Photo taken prior to pandemic mask requirement)*

# Open water swimming

## Be aware of the hidden dangers in lakes

Most drowning and near-drowning 911 calls at our lakes involve teens or young adults. Know the risks of open water swimming to prevent a tragedy.

**For even the strongest swimmer, open water can present hidden dangers** you won't find in a swimming pool: cold water temperatures, difficult to judge distances, rocks and vegetation, sudden drop-offs, limited visibility and dangerous currents.

**Wearing a life jacket** when you swim in open water can reduce heat loss, keep you afloat and increase your chances of surviving if you run into trouble.

**Water and alcohol don't mix.** Alcohol affects judgment and swimming skills. It also increases the effects of hypothermia.

Your firefighters train for water emergencies. Our response includes:

### **MARINE 16:**

A 28-foot fire/rescue boat based at the Port of Edmonds.

**BOAT 19:** A 9-foot rigid-bottom inflatable equipped with an outboard motor based at Lake Ballinger.

**BOAT 21:** A 10-foot rapid-inflate rescue boat with an outboard motor. BOAT 21 is carried on the technical rescue truck, TR 21, centrally located at Martha Lake Fire Station 21 to provide quick response to lakes throughout our service area.



Firefighters aboard BOAT 21 train for rescues. (Photo taken prior to pandemic)

## Breathing easier with new air packs

South County Fire replaced aging air packs in July. These packs provide firefighters with clean air to breathe in a fire. Neighboring fire agencies have the same models, which provides interoperability when crews are working together at fires. The new models are expected to last 10 years.



# Outdoor burning

## What is and is not allowed

### Allowed

**SMALL RECREATIONAL FIRES** are allowed on your own private property and in designated locations in some public parks. Recreational fires must be:

- At least 25 feet from any structure or combustible material.
- In a fire pit or appliance manufactured for that purpose.
- Limited to three feet in diameter and two feet in height.
- Burning only dry clean wood. Construction scraps, trash and green wood are prohibited.
- Must be constantly attended. Have a shovel, rake and garden hose or a 4-A fire extinguisher available for immediate use.

During summer burn bans, small recreational fires are usually still allowed. Homeowners are asked to take extreme caution to keep your fire in control. In some circumstances, even recreational fires are banned during fire season.

### Not allowed

**LARGE OUTDOOR FIRES** are prohibited throughout southwest Snohomish County. This includes:

- Trash or yard debris burning.
- Land-clearing fires.
- Burn barrels.
- Any fire larger than 3 feet by 3 feet.

### **DO NOT SMOKE OUT YOUR**

**NEIGHBORS:** It is illegal to smoke out your neighbor. This applies to all outdoor burning, including recreational fires. If your neighbor complains, you are required to put the fire out immediately.

**If you have a fire safety concern, call 911 immediately.**

## Burn bans

For current status, call the Snohomish County Burning Information Line: 425-388-3508

# COMMISSIONER'S CORNER



By Commissioner  
Drew Burnett

## Board selects Thad Hovis as new Fire Chief

I am excited to announce the Board of Fire Commissioners has selected Thad Hovis as Fire Chief of South County Fire. Prior to this appointment, Chief Hovis served four months as our interim fire chief. During that time, he demonstrated to the board, staff, and most importantly, the people we serve, that he has the experience, knowledge, skills and passion to lead our regional fire authority into the future.

Chief Hovis had the unenviable task of assuming the helm of South County Fire during a global pandemic. Under his leadership, our staff has done a phenomenal job charting a course where none existed to provide outstanding emergency response while keeping our residents and firefighters safe. Others around the country have looked to us and adopted many of the standards and practices established by South County Fire. Chief Hovis has also fostered and encouraged countywide fire service collaboration to develop common response plans and secure critical resources, such as personal protective gear, vital to the delivery of emergency services during this difficult time.

Some of you may already be acquainted with Chief Hovis. He has spent his entire career serving the people of south Snohomish County. Chief Hovis grew up in Edmonds. He began volunteering with the Edmonds Fire Department in 1995 and was hired by the Mountlake Terrace Fire Department in 1996. Chief Hovis moved through the ranks over the next two decades as five local fire agencies combined to become South County Fire. The relationships he has established over the course of his career have earned Chief Hovis support within our organization and the communities we serve. He knows and understands the issues we face in our region and our fire authority.

Please join me in congratulating Chief Hovis! His determination, vision and expertise are backed by a 25-year track record of service to the people of South Snohomish County. I do not think you could find a better fit to lead the outstanding team at our regional fire authority now and moving forward.



Board Chair Jim Kenny gives Fire Chief Thad Hovis a congratulatory elbow bump after his swearing in ceremony.



**HEADQUARTERS**  
12425 Meridian Avenue S  
Everett WA 98208  
(425) 551-1200  
[www.southsnofire.org](http://www.southsnofire.org)

Headquarters is currently closed to visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Commissioners

Jim Kenny, *Board Chair*  
Bob Meador, *Vice Chair*  
Drew Burnett  
David Chan  
Mark Laurence  
Chris Teofilak  
Greg Urban

### Fire Chief

Thad Hovis

Board of Commissioners meetings are the first, second and third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Regular meetings are currently being held remotely using Zoom teleconferencing. Login instructions, agendas, minutes and videos are available at [www.southsnofire.org/meetings](http://www.southsnofire.org/meetings).

### Neighborhood Fire Stations

All stations are fully staffed and responding to 911 calls, but are currently closed to visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Fire Station 10 • Keeler's Corner

3922 156th Street SW  
Lynnwood WA 98087

#### Fire Station 11 • Mariner

12310 Meridian Avenue S  
Everett WA 98208

#### Fire Station 12 • Hilton Lake

3525 108th Street SE  
Everett WA 98208

#### Fire Station 13 • Silver Firs

13611 Puget Park Drive  
Everett WA 98208

#### Fire Station 14 • Blue Ridge

18800 68th Avenue W  
Lynnwood WA 98037

#### Fire Station 15 • Lynnwood Civic Center

18800 44th Avenue W  
Lynnwood WA 98036

#### Fire Station 16 • Maplewood

8429 196th Street SW  
Edmonds WA 98026

#### Fire Station 17 • Downtown Edmonds

275 Sixth Avenue N  
Edmonds WA 98020

#### Fire Station 18 • Brier

21206 Poplar Way  
Brier WA 98036

#### Fire Station 19 • Mountlake Terrace

5902 232nd Street SW  
Mountlake Terrace WA 98043

#### Fire Station 20 • Esperance

23009 88th Avenue W  
Edmonds WA 98026

#### Fire Station 21 • Martha Lake

16819 13th Avenue W  
Lynnwood WA 98037

#### Fire Station 22 • Hilltop

20510 Damson Road  
Lynnwood WA 98036

#### Fire Station 23 • Lake Serene

4323 Serene Way  
Lynnwood WA 98087