

House Calls



NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 9

WINTER 2015

INSIDE

**DON'T LET YOUR
DRIVEWAY GATE BAR
EMERGENCY ACCESS**

**WILDFIRE 2014:
SCFD 9 RESPONDS**

Save the Date

Demo Day &
Wellness Fair
Saturday, June 6
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
3801 E Farwell Road
Mead



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Spokane County
Fire District 9



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BLOG
fire9prevention.org

WWW.SCFD9.ORG

509-466-4602



A Message from the Chief

CALL VOLUME ON THE RISE

2014 WAS A BUSY YEAR FOR FIRE DISTRICT 9, IN FACT IT WAS THE BUSIEST IN OUR SIXTY-SIX YEAR HISTORY. Call volume rose by 571 alarms or 16.5% in 2014. This is the largest increase in annual call volume we have ever seen. This increase presents two problems for the District. The first concern is that the increase in call volume outpaced community growth by 100%. The second concern is that 27% of the increase is directly related to two urgent care clinics. We are seeing patients with true emergencies showing up at the urgent care clinics when they should be calling 911. This trend is disturbing in that these folks are delaying emergency care by driving to clinics that are not prepared to deal with heart attacks, strokes and significant trauma. Your first consideration in a medical emergency should always be to call 911. If



JACK CATES, FIRE CHIEF, SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #9

you have been directed to do otherwise by your insurance company, we would like to know about it. We will continue to plan ahead and ensure we are staffed and equipped to respond to these dramatic spikes in service demand.

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INSURANCE RATING REMAINS AT 4

IN OUR PAST ISSUE I WROTE ABOUT THE BUSINESS SIDE OF RUNNING A FIRE DEPARTMENT. One of the topics was our insurance rating established by the Washington Survey Rating Bureau. The WSRB rates the District on items such as staffing, apparatus, emergency communications and training to name a few. A low rating equals lower homeowners' insurance premiums for our residents. We are pleased to report that our rating remained unchanged at 4.



Don't Let Your Driveway Gate Bar Emergency Access

LET'S TALK ABOUT GATES FOR A MINUTE. All of the work you've done to ensure your address is posted and easy to find, combined with your accessible driveway can be blocked by a security gate. The ultimate goal is for you to have the security you need and still allow us to come to your aid when you need us. You can have the best of both worlds. It just takes a little planning.

If you call 911, we will respond. Consequently, our crews will get through just about anything. They haven't been stopped by any gate yet.

There are some things we want you to consider before installing a gate so you get the security and the emergency access you need.

First of all, ensure the gate you purchase is wide enough. When the gate is opened, it should provide a full 12-foot clear width. Many gates advertised as 12-foot gates don't provide the full 12-foot width when opened.

Secondly, consider how you're going to lock your gate. If you use a chain and padlock, we can use bolt cutters on the chain. You can then re-secure your gate pretty quickly after we've left.

If you're using something more elaborate, you may want to install a key box or key switch. We have one key system reserved for us by the Knox Corporation. No one else gets to use that master key or locking mechanism without our knowledge. That way we know that only our officers have the keys. Our first responding trucks carry the master key that will allow us to get your gate open quickly and easily. When we leave, we close the gate again and you're back in business.



PLEASE ENSURE THE GATE YOU PURCHASE IS WIDE ENOUGH. WHEN THE GATE IS OPENED, IT SHOULD PROVIDE A FULL 12-FOOT CLEAR WIDTH.

For strictly mechanical systems, a key box can hold the key that will open your gate. The first units to arrive get the key from the key box and open the gate for their access leaving it open for following units. For electrically controlled gates, a key switch is even quicker. It opens the gate directly from our master key and keeps it open for following emergency units.

Remember, no one else gets our master key. That master key is strictly a Fire District 9 tool for emergency use only. We perform regular inventories of our master keys to ensure we have them all accounted for. In fact, you can't even purchase a key switch or key box without our signature authorizing the purchase. That way we know where every purchase is being installed.

Existing gate assemblies can be retrofitted with a key box or key switch for rapid emergency access. If you're interested, stop by our office (3801 E. Farwell Road) and talk with our Fire Prevention Division staff about gate options. We can show you examples of key boxes and key switches and can get the order information lined up for you.

**M&O LEVY
RENEWAL:
WE APPRECIATE
YOUR SUPPORT!**



**1200+ POUNDS OF FOOD
COLLECTED BY OUR CREWS AND DONATED
TO THE MEAD FOOD BANK DURING OUR
SANTA OPERATIONS IN DECEMBER
THANK YOU!**

Wildfire 2014: SCFD 9 Responds

IN THE LAST YEAR FIRE DISTRICT 9 PERSONNEL HAVE ASSISTED WITH DOZENS OF LARGE FIRES ACROSS THE WESTERN STATES as well as two of the most devastating natural events in Washington State history – the deadly Oso Mudslide in Snohomish County on the west side of the Cascades and the massive lightning-caused Carlton Complex fires in Okanogan County here on the east side this past summer. Our commitment to send resources to these events not only helps to mitigate the emergency situation at hand, but provides our personnel with valuable hands-on experience that translates to providing better service here at home.

We definitely do not wish for major catastrophic events, but it is our duty and our promise to you to be prepared if one does hit our community. In addition to the major incidents we respond to outside of our jurisdiction, our firefighters are continually exposed to all types of training such as auto extrication using vehicles at the local Pull & Save lot, water rescue training on the Little Spokane River, ice rescue training on the frozen pond at the Wandermere Golf Course, high-angle rescue training at the cliffs above Shields Park as well as fire training of all types at our training facility on Farwell Road in Mead. We thank these community partners and others such as The Pallet Place who provide the pallets for us to burn in our burn building – all of which allows us to create the most realistic training available for our crews.

Although it feels like spring, we haven't experienced our green-up yet; this, combined with a couple months of below-average precipitation, means the grasses and other fine fuels are more flammable than would be typical for late winter. We know that the recent spring-like temperatures are encouraging property clearing and pile burning. Please be careful as the abundance of dormant/dead grasses, warm temperatures and the recent lack of precipitation are making a busy start to the wildland fire season.

Please rest assured that our crews are ready for whatever you and Mother Nature throw at us.



THE DEVASTATION FACED BY EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ON THE OSO MUDSLIDE WAS IMMENSE.



ONE OF OUR CREWS ON THE CARLTON COMPLEX FIRES IN OKANOGAN COUNTY THIS PAST SUMMER WITH A THANK YOU FROM A YOUNG RESIDENT WHOSE HOME THEY PROTECTED.



A HUGE COLUMN OF SMOKE FROM THE CARLTON COMPLEX FIRES IN OKANOGAN COUNTY.



House Calls

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HOUSE CALLS is a publication of
Spokane County Fire District 9

Jack Cates, Fire Chief
Michael R. Atwood, Commissioner
James E. Bennett, Commissioner
Thomas R. McGarry, Commissioner

*If you are a resident of the District and would like a **FREE address post**, please contact:
District Administration, 466-4602*



SCFD9 VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

RESPOND TO THE CALL

THE BEST PART OF A FIREFIGHTER'S JOB IS KNOWING WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

If that appeals to you too, we'd welcome you as a volunteer—and we'll train you to work alongside the other members of our team.

Are you at least 18 years old, living close to one of our fire stations, and willing to help others at a moment's notice? Call 466-4602 for information on how to get started.



**FREE
Classes**



FREE First Aid/CPR & CPR Classes for Spokane County Fire District 9 Citizens & Businesses

For more information, please call Administration at 466-4602 or visit www.scfd9.org.

FREE BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK



Stop by and see us on the first Tuesday of every month from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Wandermere Fred Meyer.

**FREE
Check**