

Proposition 1: Snohomish County Fire District 7 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy

Voters in Fire District 7 will find Proposition 1 on the mail-in ballot for the Primary Election on August 17, 2010.

In this fact sheet, we've answered common questions about the levy. Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns at 360-668-5357 or reastman@firedistrict7.com.



-Richard Eastman, Fire Chief

Why is Fire District 7 seeking renewal of its levy?

EMS funding is vital to the delivery of emergency medical/paramedic care. In 2009, Fire District 7 responded to over 5,000 calls. Over 77 percent of those calls were medical related. All Fire District 7 firefighters provide emergency medical care, and are certified as either Emergency Medical Technicians or Paramedics. When someone dials 911, the closest available unit responds. This often means a fire engine will be first to arrive at a medical call and will provide emergency medical care until an aid or medic unit arrives to transport the patient.

This emergency medical care is partially funded by the EMS levy that currently requires renewal every six years. In 1982, Fire District 7 was the first fire district in Snohomish County to implement an advanced life support (paramedic) program for its citizens. Since 1981, Fire District 7 has functioned with a levy rate of 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Due to decreasing insurance reimbursements, increasing maintenance/labor/supply costs, and decreasing property values, we are at a point where we cannot maintain the current level of service without increasing the levy rate. Currently, the paramedic program alone consumes 26 percent of the budget, yet the current EMS levy only generates 11 percent of the property tax revenue collected.

How will EMS levy funds be used?

-- To maintain EMS response times, current fire stations and apparatus

EMS levy funds are critical in keeping current aid and medic units in service at all Fire District 7 fire



stations. The state of Washington requires fire departments to report on response standards annually. These standards are established by each department, but are based on national statistics that determine survivability in critical events. It is our goal to utilize these standards to arrive at your house within that timeframe. The goal for Fire District 7 is a response time of 7 minutes and 30 seconds or less (from time of dispatch to arrival). Our average response time is currently 6 minutes and 48 seconds. In order to maintain this response time, we

must continue to provide the current level of service. We cannot accomplish this without the funding of a 50 cent EMS levy.

What will happen if the levy is not approved?

If the levy is not approved, Fire District 7 will lose all of the current EMS levy funding for emergency medical care (\$1.57 million dollars per year). A financial loss of this magnitude will result in a substantial service decrease to the citizens of Fire District 7. We would again ask citizens to approve



the EMS levy in another election. However, if the levy is not approved, the realistic side effect of the loss of revenue would be intermittent closures of fire stations throughout the district. With a continued lack of funding, permanent closures would become a reality. These reductions in service would greatly impact our ability to respond to your emergencies. With over 77 percent of Fire District 7's calls involving medical aid, emergency medical care is crucial.

Will citizens have to vote on this levy again?

Traditionally, the EMS levy is voted on every six years. The legislature now allows for fire districts to request a permanent levy rate, eliminating the need to continually renew. Going back to our citizens every six years costs the department funds that we feel could be utilized to provide better service to our community. Due to the history of your continued support, and in an effort to save money, we have chosen to move to a permanent EMS levy.



How much will it cost citizens?

Currently, the voter approved maximum EMS levy assessment is 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The proposal asks that when the levy is renewed, citizens vote on increasing the levy to 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The average assessed home value in Fire District 7 for 2010 is \$406,529; therefore, the increase for the average household would be \$10.30 per month.

When will citizens vote?

Proposition 1 will be on the Primary Election, set for August 17, 2010.

Public EMS Levy Informational Meetings:

July 15th at 6 p.m. at Station 77
6610 Snohomish/Cascade Drive
Snohomish 98296

July 29th at 6 p.m. at Station 71
8010 180th St. SE
Snohomish 98296



Do you have questions?
Contact us at **360-668-5357** or
email reastman@firedistrict7.com.
Information is also available on our website!
www.firedistrict7.com