



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For more information, visit www.oakharbor.org/fire, or contact us at rmerrill@oakharbor.org or 360-279-4700



What type of fire department does the City of Harbor have?

Oak Harbor Fire Department (OHFD) is a combination department with 12 career firefighters and about 32 paid-on-call firefighters.



What are the staffing levels at OHFD?

OHFD has two career shifts (A & B). There are 3 career firefighters assigned to each shift and they work 4 twelve-hour days (7am to 7pm). Additionally there is one paid-on-call firefighter on each day shift. Overnight, from 7pm to 7am, the 4 firefighter positions are filled by paid-on-call firefighters. A career captain is the command officer.



How many fire stations does Oak Harbor have?

Oak Harbor has one (1) fire station located at 855 E Whidbey Ave. This is the only station serving the City of Oak Harbor.



How big is the City of Oak Harbor?

The City is 9.714 square miles and has a population of 24,622 residents.



How many calls for service does OHFD receive each year?

There were 1,520 calls for service in 2021, of which 63 were fire emergencies. In 2020, there were 1,403 calls for service. Learn more about OHFD calls for service in our published annual reports located at: www.oakharbor.org/fire/page/ohfd-annual-reports.



What is OHFD's average response time?

In 2021, the average response time was 5 minutes, 21 seconds. This includes all call locations and types. In 2020, the average response time was 0:05:54. Our goal, and the standard is less than 4 minutes to medical calls and less than 5 minutes to fire calls.



Why is the city pursuing a new fire station?

As Oak Harbor continues to grow and expand, particularly in the southwest area, our response times continue to rise. A 7-8 minute response time to the southwest area is not acceptable. The current station was built in 1992, in what was considered the central part of the city.

Independent studies in 2005 and 2016 recommended building a second station in the southwest area to improve response times and capabilities.



Why is the City asking for additional career firefighting staff?

At times there are only 3 firefighters on shift, providing protection to the entire city (3 is our current minimum staffing level). This crew could potentially be on an incident when a second or third request for service is dispatched, there isn't a crew available to respond in a timely manner.

Firefighters are needed to staff the new fire station and improve the level of service citywide.



I live on the east side of the city, why should I vote for levies to build and staff a west side station?

The crew from the current station could be on an incident on the west side of the city, leaving the east side unprotected. The levies improve response times and capabilities citywide.



Why are you placing 1) a bond measure and 2) a tax levy on the General Election Ballot in November 2022?

Due to the type of funding needed, you will see two items on the ballot: 1) the general obligation bond measure is to be used for capital items (building the new station and purchasing a new ladder truck). It can only be used for these projects. 2) the tax levy will fund the day-to-day operations of the new station, including 24/7 staffing, and will be used to replace one of our aging fire engines.



How much will this cost the average homeowner?

The levies will cost about \$27 per month for the average homeowner: \$18.18 for operations and staffing, and \$7.78 for the general obligation bond (building station and purchasing ladder truck).



When was the last time the fire department had a bond and/or levy?

The last time was in 1989. That bond paid for the construction of the fire station on East Whidbey Avenue and our 1992 ladder truck.





WHAT WILL THE LEVY PAY FOR?

The City of Oak Harbor is planning to seek a fire service levy on the November 8, 2022, general election.

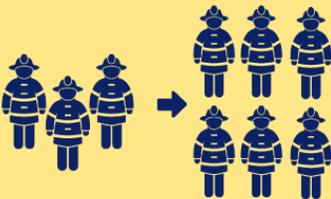


WHAT

20-year bond to build and operate a small, satellite fire station (staffed 24/7) in the southwest area of Oak Harbor to improve service response times.

WHY

Since 1992, when Station 81 was built, Oak harbor's population has increased by 43%, the size of the city has grown by 54%. A 2nd station was recommended by a 2016 independent response analysis which found that 25% of residents live outside of target response times.



WHAT

Increase minimum staffing from 3 firefighters per day to 6.

WHY

Minimum staffing at OHFD is 3 firefighters and one command officer. Oak Harbor has .49 firefighters for every 1,000 residents. Comparable WA cities have 1.25 FFs/1,000 residents. Call volume has increase 91% since the 1990s and 17% of our calls overlap another call. Additional staff without a 2nd station will increase capabilities, but will not decrease (or improve) response times.



WHAT

Replace two 24-year-old pumper engines (E-813 and E-814).

HOW

Replace E-813 with a quint ladder truck via a 12-year loan.
Replace E-814 with a pumper engine via a 9-year loan.
Quint and pumper will serve 2nd station.



WHAT

Purchase necessary protective gear and tools.

WHY

Personal protection equipment (PPE - AKA bunker gear) protects firefighters' health and safety, it must be replaced every 10 years. Additional tools and equipment will be required for the second fire station and newly hired firefighters.

Learn more and share your thoughts at:

WWW.OAKHARBOR.ORG/FIRELEVY

