



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Lacey Fire District Three

Why does the fire engine respond when an ambulance is requested for a medical problem?

During a medical emergency, seconds count. All fire department personnel are trained Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and will often arrive before an ambulance. The firefighters can immediately initiate appropriate medical care and in more complicated medical emergencies, fire department paramedics will simultaneously be dispatched. Our department is committed to providing the highest level of care possible and this means getting our emergency personnel to you, as quickly as possible.

Our apparatus serve a multitude of purposes and are designed to address all potential risks that exist in our community (medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, structure fires, rescue and other calls for service). In the event of a subsequent fire call, personnel can respond immediately without needing to return to the fire station for the appropriate equipment.

Why do so many fire department personnel show up at a medical call?

The **Thurston Communications 911 Call Center** uses a criteria-based dispatching system to determine the appropriate types and numbers of resources to send on a medical emergency.

For the most life threatening calls, such as a cardiac arrest, a combination of a fire engine, medic unit and an aid unit will respond.

In these circumstances, there are a number of critical tasks that need to be accomplished immediately, including:

- Airway maintenance
- Cardiac compressions
- Oxygen therapy
- Defibrillation
- Administration of IV medications
- Scene safety
- Documentation
- Care of the family

Cardiac arrest survival rates in Lacey Fire District 3 are **over 40%**, which is significantly higher than the national cardiac arrest survival rate of **less than 15%**.

What do fire fighters do during their shift?

A fire fighter's day begins 7:30 a.m. at "tailboard"; a briefing between the off-going and on-coming shifts. After the morning briefing, our crews perform a comprehensive check of their equipment and apparatus to ensure that it is ready for emergency response. Firefighters then have scheduled activities including training, equipment and station maintenance, public education, building safety inspections, fire station and apparatus tours, blood pressure checks, bicycle helmet and car seat fittings and physical conditioning.

More importantly, our personnel respond to more than 10,000 requests for emergency service annually. Averaging 30 calls per day with a 23 minutes on-scene time, our crews spend more than 11 hours per day on emergency scenes.

Why are fire department emergency vehicles left running while on emergency scenes?

Our fire trucks and emergency response vehicles have a much greater energy demand than ordinary passenger vehicles. It is necessary to leave these vehicles running for a number of reasons.

If a fire engine or ladder truck is involved in fire fighting, the engine needs to be running to power the water pumps. On our medic units, climate control and refrigeration protects and preserves sensitive equipment and medication. On-board computers, radios, flashlights, medical equipment and thermal imaging cameras require constant power. In addition, the emergency lighting used to notify of our presence or to light up an emergency scene requires a significant amount of electricity.

If the engines were turned off at the emergency scene, the power demands would rapidly deplete the batteries and make restarting the vehicle unlikely. With critical response vehicles, where seconds can mean life or death, we can't take the chance that one of our vehicles won't start. When these apparatus are in our stations, they are plugged into power cords that supply the charging needs without the engine running.

***** UPDATE*****

Lacey Fire District 3 has just been awarded a grant through the Department of Ecology's "Clean Diesel Program". This program, consisting of exhaust retrofitting and idle reduction technology will significantly reduce the amount of diesel pollution emitted by our fire engines and emergency vehicles.

Does Lacey Fire District Three teach first aid/CPR?

Not currently. However, Thurston County Medic One sponsors free CPR classes on a regular basis. Please visit the [Medic One website](#) or call 360-491-2410 for an updated list of classes being offered throughout the County.

I saw a fire truck at the local supermarket, and firefighters inside buying groceries. Why do firefighters take the fire trucks to shop for groceries?

To ensure an effective, rapid response at the time of an emergency, our crews must stay together during their entire shift. Our fire fighters and paramedics work 24-hour shifts with no scheduled breaks and meals are not provided by the department. Personnel on shift must purchase their own food and prepare their own meals so they will often make a daily trip to the grocery store within their response area to buy whatever they need to prepare their meals for the entire shift. They maintain constant radio contact with our dispatch center and will respond to an emergency, regardless of their location. Very often, our crews spend long periods out of their station on emergency calls, while training, conducting public education or completing building inspections.

If you come across our fire fighters while at the store or at your work and are curious about what they are doing, just ask them!

If I call 9-1-1, will I receive a bill from Lacey Fire?

No. You will not be billed for medical, fire, rescue or any of the other non-emergency services that we provide.

Our paramedic/firefighters on Medic One paramedic units only transport life-threatening emergencies; if a Medic One paramedic unit provides the transport to the hospital there is no fee for the response or transport. The entire county-wide Medic One/EMS system's annual operating expense is supported by a Medic One EMS levy.

If paramedic transport is not necessary, the patient may be given the option to be transported by private ambulance, ride with a friend or relative, or schedule a future appointment with their private doctor. If the private ambulance is chosen, ambulance companies charge a fee for transport. Private ambulances are licensed by the State and County and their fees are public record.

What is the closest fire station to my house?

For this information, please see our website at www.laceyfire.com and look under "About Us" and "Find Your Local Fire Station" for [station information](#) page and [map](#).

Can my family/group tour the fire station?

Lacey Fire welcomes the opportunity to have the public visit any of our fire stations. If your family, school or group would like to schedule a tour, please call (360) 491-2410, Monday-Friday, from 8AM-5PM. In addition to touring the fire station and viewing our apparatus, our personnel can also provide age appropriate fire and life safety information catered to your request.

What is my fire insurance rating?

The Washington Survey & Rating Bureau (WSRB) has classified our fire protection rating as follows:

- Class 3: City of Lacey
- Class 4: Outside of the city, within 1,000' of a fire hydrant
- Class 5: All other areas of the Fire District

These ratings are used in determining your fire insurance rates. Check with your insurance company to see if they use the WSRB fire protection ratings and if so, what fire protection rating is assigned to your property. ***This phone call could save you money!***

What if I have more questions about Lacey Fire District Three?

Please visit our website at www.laceyfire.com, or feel free to call us at 360-491-2410 or email your questions to info@laceyfire.com. You can also find us on [Facebook](#) at Lacey Fire District Three.