



COWLITZ COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #5

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We Are You

We can't do this job alone



Find us on Facebook



www.sparky.org

Safety Reminders

Spring is here and Summer isn't far off. Whether you are doing yard work or just sitting outside enjoying the weather, here are some reminders to keep you and your family safe outdoors.

- Use extreme caution while operating riding mowers and tractors on uneven ground.
- When burning yard debris, (when there is no burn ban) ensure you are at least 50' away from structures, timber or power lines. Never leave the fire unattended.
- Keep combustibles away from your home and clean your landscape to create a defensible space from wildfire.
- Stay hydrated. By the time you feel thirsty, your body could already be starting to dehydrate. Keep a water bottle with you.
- Use sunscreen while outdoors. Even a short amount of direct sun exposure can cause sunburn and lead to future skin problems.

- Don't overexert yourself during the hottest part of the day. Plan your projects around the cooler temperatures.
- Always wear a lifejacket while recreating on or around the water. Children should be wearing a lifejacket before they walk on a dock and even on shore while playing in the water.
- Small children and open windows on warm days can be a recipe for disaster. Purchase window locks that allow the fresh air in without letting the children fall out when they push on the screens.
- **Don't be a Distracted Driver!** Let the texts and phone calls wait till you can stop and safely use your cell phone.

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April 2023



COWLITZ COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #5

NEWSLETTER

Thank you First Responders!

On December 23rd, 2022, during the pre-Christmas ice storm, I witnessed our Cowlitz County Fire Dist. #5 Volunteer Firefighters working together in one of the most coordinated team efforts I have ever seen. I've been a member of our fire department for over 25 years, so I've seen a thing or two.

They prepped our emergency vehicles for every type of emergency call we might have that day. Some vehicles had no tire chains, some had 2 tire chains, some had all 4 tires chained, each vehicle to be utilized a certain way. My fun memory of that day was when one of our volunteers got out of his vehicle to assist someone and couldn't even walk on the ice, he actually had to take off his boots and walk in his socks for traction. Now that's dedication!

The ice storm stopped most of us from even stepping outside. But on that day, these volunteers were there for all of us. Our team responded to 23 emergency calls in a 30-hour icy period.

I would like to thank our volunteer responders and their families. I'd also like to note that the reason that they were able to respond to these emergencies, is that they had prepared themselves, in advance, and had their vehicles equipped to safely drive to the fire station, had their homes secured and weather prepped, and had their families prepared to be home with all the provisions needed to "stay in place" for possibly 72 hours. Their advanced preparations enabled them to be there for all of us! We thank the families of these responders for allowing them to give their personal time to respond to all the emergency calls in our community, especially on these treacherous and busy days.

Thank you to FF/EMT Mike Vejar, Capt Lawrence Sharp, Special Ops Terry Sinkler, Lt Larry Fleming, FF Doug Spitzer, FF/PM Melissa Baker, FF/EMT Chris Amren, Capt Shayne Mazza, and FF/PM David McCourt.

This was a small 30 hours out of a year but, these volunteers made me proud to be part of the team. I also appreciate and want to thank all of our 25 volunteers for the work they selflessly do throughout the year!

Sincerely, from myself and the community you all serve, THANK YOU!!!

Richard VanRiper, FF/EMT and Citizen of Kalama

Feel like you want to make a difference? Come join our team. We are always looking for great help! We will provide the training!

Regular Board Meetings are held on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month at 3:30pm

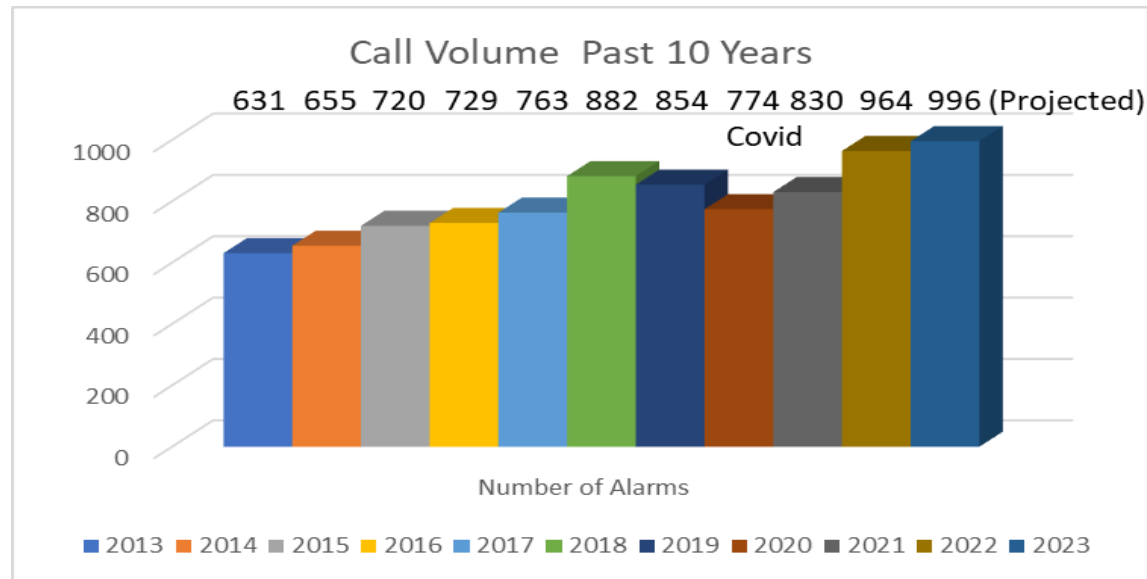


Burn permits are available at both Station 51 on Frontage Road and station 52 on Todd road. You can also find them on our website at www.Cowlitzfd5.org

Levy Lid Lift

Cowlitz County Fire District 5 (CCFD5) is facing new risks, an expanding service need, and an increase in call volume. This growth is happening at a rapid pace and the need for at least one more Firefighter/EMT or Firefighter/Paramedic on duty each shift has never been greater.

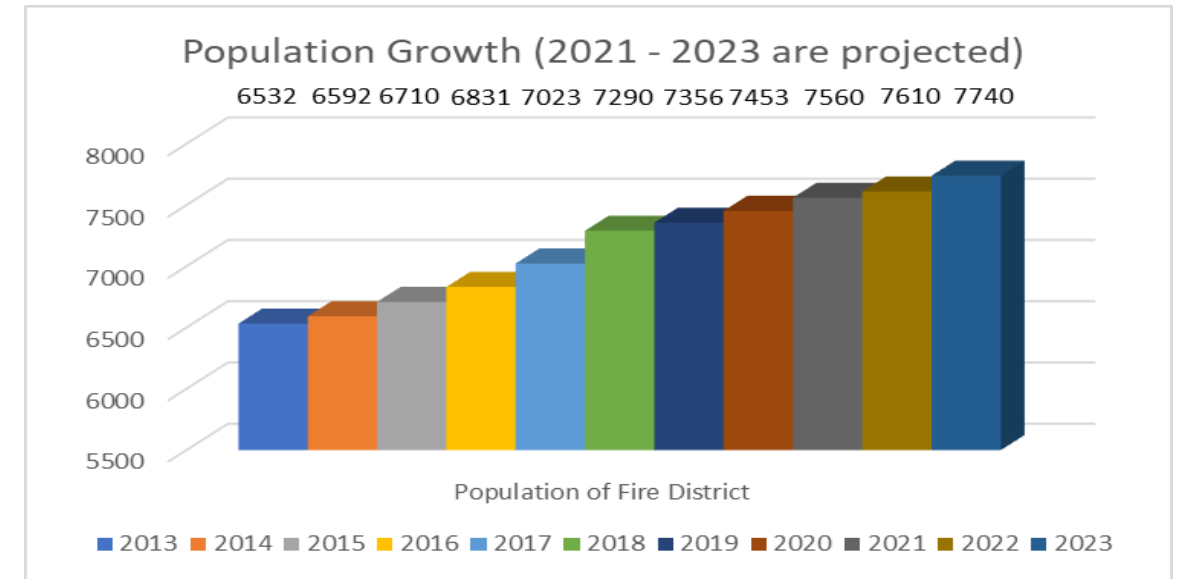
CCFD5 has realized an increase in our call volume of 45% in the past 10 years. We had 631 calls in 2013 and 964 in 2022. The increase in calls has been consistent every year except for a decrease in calls that started at the end of 2019 and continued through 2020 as Covid reduced the activities in our District. However, the increasing call volume has really picked up since 2020. We saw the call volume grow from 774 calls in 2020 to 830 calls in 2021, an increase of 7.3%. We saw the call volume grow from 830 calls in 2021 to 964 calls in 2022, an increase of 16.2%. We expect the increase in call volume to continue at a more significant rate with all of the housing and business developments coming soon.



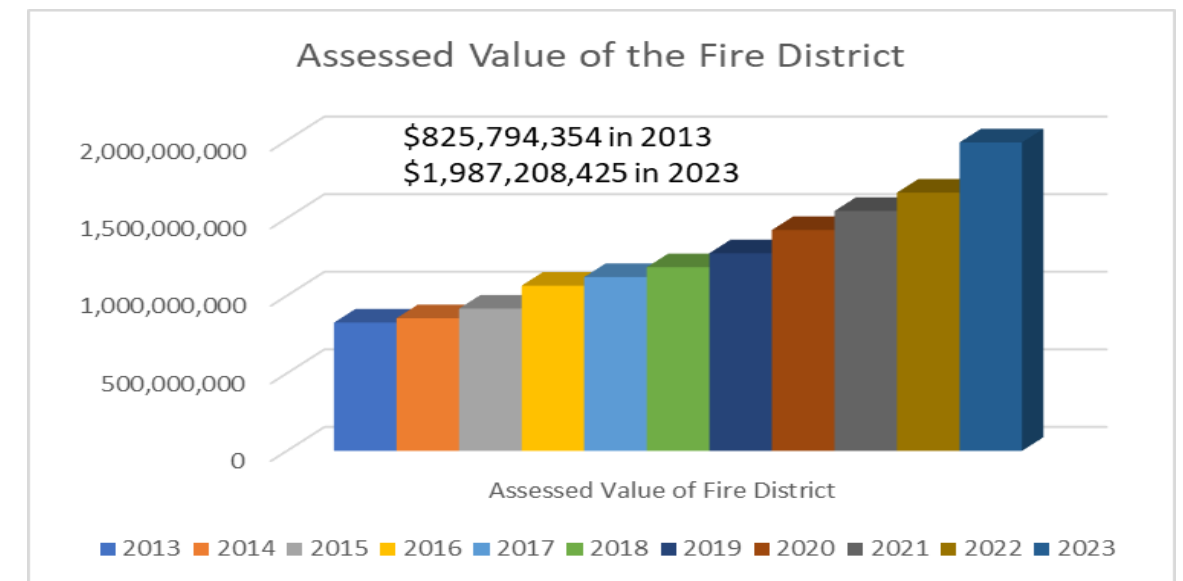
With so much growth in Kalama and the surrounding area, the Fire District must be able to respond to more frequently occurring back-to-back calls for service. Our two on duty Firefighters, one of whom is an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) and the other is a Paramedic, transport both basic life support and advanced life support patients. When they are treating and/or transporting a patient while a second call for service is received, we are dependent upon mutual aid responses from other District's along with our volunteers. With the addition of a third Firefighter on duty 24/7/365, we could hold one Firefighter back on a transport so they could work with either our volunteers and/or our administrative staff to respond to a second call. Additionally, with three Firefighters on duty, we can immediately make entrance into a structure for an obvious rescue while following nationally recognized standards. This would improve response times and enhance our capabilities.

We have incredible volunteers that contribute as much as they can. They consistently train with the Fire District and respond to calls when they are available. However, they have careers outside of the Fire District and are not always available. With the ever-increasing call volume, value of our Fire District, and population growth in the area, we need a third full-time Firefighter/EMT or Firefighter/

Paramedic on each of our three shifts. To fund the three additional full-time employees, and to replace our aging equipment, we will be proposing a levy lid lift in August of 2023.



Currently, the levy is \$0.99 per \$1,000 of assessed value of your home. We are proposing to increase the rate to \$1.35 per \$1,000 of the assessed value of your home. For a \$300,000 home, this is an increase of \$9.00 per month. For a \$400,000 home, this is an increase of \$12.00 a month. For a \$500,000 home, this is an increase of \$15.00 per month. This increase in the levy rate would supply Cowlitz County Fire District #5 at least \$710,908 depending upon the value of the district at the end of 2023.



For more information on CCFD5's levy lid lift, please come to our community lid lift presentation at fire station 52, located at 415 Todd Road, on Thursday, May 18, 2023, at 5:30pm.