



# Clallam County Fire District 3

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 30, 2018  
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### **EMS accounts for 85 percent of all calls for Clallam County Fire District 3**

SEQUIM, WASH. – In 2017, Clallam County Fire District 3 responded to 7,224 emergency calls. Eighty-five percent of those calls (6,187) were for Emergency Medical Service, or “EMS”. Fire Chief Ben Andrews says that number is not surprising considering the average age in the Sequim area is 50 or higher.

Emergency call volumes for the fire district have increased 33% in seven years. While EMS is the vast majority of those calls, the fire district also responds to fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous material spills, and motor vehicle accidents.

“EMS is the service our community relies on most, but we are really an ‘all hazards’ response agency,” said Chief Andrews. “We have to be ready in case of any emergency in our community.”

Higher call volumes mean added costs for personnel, apparatus maintenance, equipment and medical supplies. The fire district is now directing all its resources into responding to calls, which leaves nothing to hire additional staff, replace apparatus or improve or expand its facilities. It decided to turn down a grant for additional firefighters because of how the matching funds requirement would impact the fire district financially.

Clallam County Fire District 3 primarily funds emergency medical service and fire suppression through two property tax levies. Over time, these levy rates fall as property values rise, which limits the fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year plus a 1% increase allowed by law. The one percent revenue increase is not keeping up with the demand for service or even inflation.

Starting next year, the fire district will have to draw down reserve accounts just to respond to emergency calls, which is a concern. Having adequate reserve accounts is necessary for the financial well-being of the fire district.

“We need to be able to meet the demand for service and have enough funds in reserves to weather any storm that may be ahead of us,” said Chief Andrews. “It’s about financial solvency.”

In order to address the current situation, Fire District 3 is considering asking voters to approve a lid lift for its general levy sometime in 2018. Voters originally approved a general levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2004. Since that time, it has fallen to \$1.26. If approved, the 24-cent lid lift would be an additional \$60 per year (\$5 per month) for the owner of a \$250,000 home. Funding would be used to maintain emergency service levels, improve staffing where possible, train personnel, and fund some facility and apparatus needs.

The fire district would like to have input from the community and will hold public meetings sometime in early spring to hear from the public. In the meantime, interested parties are encouraged to send their thoughts to Chief Andrews at [bandrews@ccfd3.org](mailto:bandrews@ccfd3.org) or 323 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Sequim, Wash. 98382. All communication is welcome and becomes part of the public record.

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*Since 1914 residents of Clallam County have volunteered their time and financial support to provide emergency services for the greater Sequim community. Today Clallam County Fire District 3 provides a 24-hour fire and emergency medical response to 30,000 people with a combination of volunteer, part-time, and full-time personnel. We respond to an average of 7,300 emergency calls per year, and appreciate the support from our community.*