

THE DISPATCH

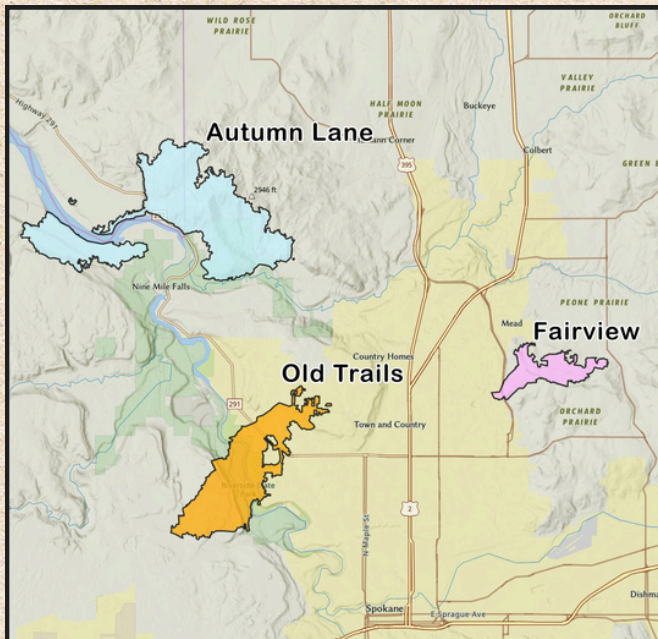


Spokane County Fire District 4

Feature Story

An Unprecedented Fire Event: The Spokane Complex Fires

On August 1, the National Weather Service issued its first-ever Particularly Dangerous Situation Red Flag Warning for Central and Eastern Washington, a designation reserved for the most extreme fire weather conditions. That same day, the Old Trails, Fairview, and Autumn Lane fires started and grew rapidly amid high winds, low humidity, and dry fuels, becoming known collectively as the Spokane Complex Fires. Together, these three wildfires burned thousands of acres, destroyed hundreds of homes, and forced tens of thousands of residents to evacuate. The Autumn Lane Fire burned directly into Fire District 4.



Map of the Spokane Complex Fires 2026

Old Trails: 3,175 acres

Autumn Lane: 5,762 acres

Fairview: 992 acres

Total: 9,929 acres

Ahead of the extreme fire weather forecast, Spokane County's fire chiefs made the call to preposition resources, forming an interagency fire service strike team made up of Spokane County fire service members in anticipation of the conditions. When the Old Trails Fire broke out, the prepositioned strike team was already in place and was called into action within ten minutes of reporting to its staging location. That readiness reflects the planning and coordination that took place among agencies.

During the initial attack on these fires, our automatic and mutual aid systems performed as designed. County, city, state, and federal partners, including law enforcement and emergency management, worked together throughout the response. Engines, crews, and command staff from across the region operated under a unified command structure, supporting structure protection and containment efforts under demanding conditions.

None of this work would have been possible without our people. Our on-duty crews worked long shifts on the fireline and in structure protection through smoke and intense fire behavior. Members answered callbacks to cover stations, leaving their families and, in some cases, their own homes that were threatened by the fires to report for duty. This ensured that all other 911 calls for service were answered.

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Our volunteers filled every role asked of them in operations, logistics, and support. Our maintenance staff kept apparatus in service throughout the incident, and our administrative staff coordinated logistics, managed communications, and supported our personnel and the public without interruption. Every role mattered, and every one of our people showed up.

We also want to recognize our community. Residents who evacuated promptly and followed directions from emergency personnel helped keep our operations safe and effective. Neighbors who welcomed fire crews onto their property, brought food and water to staging areas, and checked on one another, demonstrated the character of our community. Your patience and cooperation throughout a difficult and uncertain time are appreciated.

To those in our community and across the region who lost property in these fires, our thoughts are with you. We recognize the weight of that loss and extend our condolences as you begin the work of recovery.

Finally, to the firefighters, officers, and support personnel of District 4, thank you. Your work during the Spokane Complex Fires reflected the professionalism and commitment this district stands for, and we are grateful for every one of you.

OUR COMMUNITY HAS SHOWN ITS STRENGTH.

Together, we will keep moving forward.



A firefighter works on the fireline during the Spokane Complex Fires.

| Wildfire Ready

Why Become a Firewise Community?



Together, We Can Make Our Community More Wildfire-Ready

For more information, visit:
NFPA.org

Becoming a “Firewise USA Community®” gives neighbors an opportunity to work together to reduce wildfire risk and help protect the home and places we value.

The process starts with neighbors organizing a volunteer committee and working with local fire and wildfire experts to identify potential risks and opportunities for improvement. From there, the community develops a practical three-year action plan that can include neighborhood projects, homeowner improvements, educational activities, and other efforts that make homes and the surrounding area more resistant to wildfire ignition.

Firewise isn’t about making a community fireproof; it’s about being proactive, informed, and prepared. Even small actions, when multiplied across a neighborhood, can make a meaningful difference.

Most importantly, Firewise provides a framework for neighbors helping neighbors, building awareness, cooperation, preparedness, and a stronger community before a wildfire threatens.

| Wildfire Mitigation

Planning for a More Fire-Resilient Community

Planning is beginning for the Dennison-Chattaroy Fuels Reduction Project. The project will focus on reducing hazardous vegetation and wildfire fuels within the project area.

Our Fire Prevention team is beginning the planning and coordination needed to identify treatment areas, establish priorities, and prepare for future mitigation work. Projects like this are part of District 4's broader Community Risk Reduction efforts to reduce wildfire risk throughout the district.

Wildfire preparedness starts with the area immediately surrounding your home. Our Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) program helps residents identify potential wildfire risks around their property and learn practical ways to reduce those risks. A home assessment can help you understand where improvements may make your property more wildfire-ready.

Interested in a Home Ignition Zone assessment?

Sign up online: scfd4.org/prevention/#wildfire

| Fire Prevention

Before You Light The Fire

As cooler weather arrives, take a few minutes to make sure your fireplace and chimney are ready for the season. Have your chimney inspected and cleaned if needed, especially if you use your fireplace regularly. Check for creosote buildup, damage, or other hazards before lighting your first fire.

Use dry, seasoned firewood, keep anything flammable away from the fireplace, and always use a sturdy screen or door to help contain sparks and embers.



A little preparation before the first fire can help keep your home and family safe all winter.

| Fire Investigation

K9 Chardonnay Recertifies

K9 Chardonnay recently traveled to Chula Vista, California, for a week of intensive Ignitable Liquid Detection K9 recertification training. Months of ongoing training and preparation helped prepare Chardonnay and Chief Harms for the rigorous testing ahead. After a week of training and evaluation, Chardonnay successfully completed the program and passed her recertification.

Maintaining certification requires continued training and testing to demonstrate that Chardonnay and her handler can reliably locate potential ignitable liquid residues during fire investigations.



K9 Chardonnay with her handler, Deputy Chief & Fire Marshal, Jared Harms

Chardonnay remains an important resource for District 4's Fire Investigation program and for agencies throughout the region that request assistance.

| Prevention & Education

Honoring History, Protecting Our Future

Every year during Fire Prevention Week, we take time to remember one of the most tragic events in American history: the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. In a matter of days, the devastating blaze claimed more than 250 lives, left 100,000 residents homeless, destroyed over 17,400 structures, and scorched more than 2,000 acres of land. Out of this solemn history grew a national commitment to safety, education, and vigilance.

Behind the scenes every single day, our agency's dedicated Fire Prevention Team works tirelessly to ensure history never repeats itself in our community. From conducting detailed building inspections and enforcing vital life-safety codes to leading educational outreach programs in local schools and businesses, their day-to-day hard work forms our first line of defense. They evaluate potential hazards, test safety systems, and equip citizens with the knowledge needed to prevent emergency situations before they ever start.

While our fire prevention specialists work around the clock to mitigate risks, true safety requires a team effort across our whole community. Simple actions like testing smoke alarms monthly, maintaining clear exit routes, practicing home escape plans, and properly handling heat and electrical sources make a massive difference.

Fire safety isn't just a duty reserved for inspectors and firefighters; it is a shared responsibility that protects our homes, businesses, and loved ones. Fire prevention is everyone's responsibility.



Charge Smart. Stay Safe. Power Up Safely.
Help prevent lithium-ion battery fires.

| Training & Development

A First for District 4: Inside Our Inaugural Career Recruit Academy

We're incredibly proud to celebrate the graduation of Spokane County Fire District 4's first-ever Career Recruit Academy class! And because they were the first, they needed a fitting name. They proudly called themselves the Lab Rats. As our inaugural class, they helped us test and refine the new academy and, most importantly, helped make it a success!

Over 10 weeks, these four recruits worked hard, put in long hours and were challenged both physically and mentally as they prepared for their careers with District 4. Training covered Hazmat, Operations, Fire Suppression, Tactical, Wildland, and Search & Rescue, along with extensive hands-on training including live-fire exercises, hose evolutions, ladder operations, vehicle extrication, wildland scenarios and search and rescue exercises.

Training Captain Vincent Speziale served as the Drill Master, with several of our on-duty crews and officers serving as instructors throughout the academy. From the classroom to the training ground, this was truly a District 4 team effort, with members sharing their time, knowledge and experience.

Behind the scenes, our Training Division put in countless hours developing curriculum, preparing scenarios, coordinating instructors and equipment, and evaluating skills. Their hard work helped make this inaugural academy a success and created a strong foundation for the classes that will follow.

Congratulations to our graduates:

Dylan McGillen, our academy Valedictorian!

Joseph Garrett

Baylee MacGregor

Joseph Orr

To our inaugural Lab Rats: you were the first to take this journey, and you helped set the standard for those who will follow. You worked hard, embraced the challenges and gave us plenty to be proud of.

Congratulations, and welcome to the SCFD4 family, graduates!



L-R: Dylan McGillen, Joseph Garrett,
Baylee MacGregor & Joseph Orr

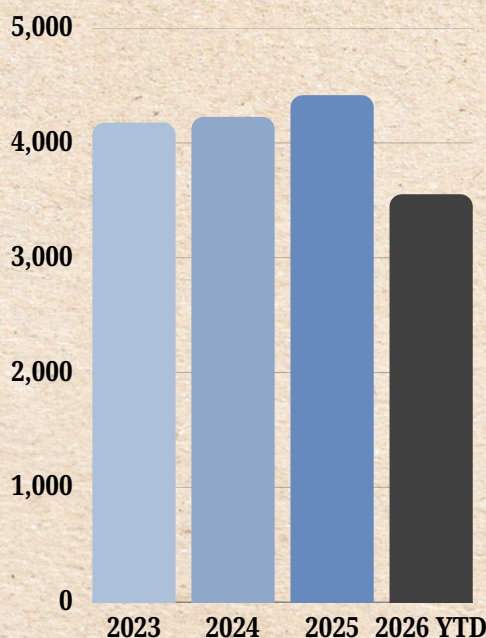


| Call Volumes Continue to Increase

August brought a significant increase in calls for service. Our crews responded to 478 calls, compared with 387 in August 2025, an increase of 91 calls, or nearly 24%.

The increase came during an exceptionally demanding month, as the Spokane-area wildfires displaced families, destroyed homes, and required emergency responders across the region to work around the clock.

While not every call was fire-related, August highlighted the demands placed on our crews and the importance of being ready when our community needs us most.



**24%
Increase
In Calls**

August 2026

2026 represents year-to-date calls through September.

Help Us Locate You

Can emergency responders find your home quickly?

Clearly visible address signs help emergency responders locate your property when every second counts.

Make sure your address is visible from the road. Need assistance?

[Click here to submit an address sign request.](#)

Stay in Touch



[SCFD4.org](https://scfd4.org)



info@scfd4.org



509-467-4500



315 Crawford St
Deer Park, WA 99006

Follow Us



Upcoming District Events

2nd Annual Fall Festival

Friday, October 23 | 3:30–7:30 PM

Station #44 | Mead

Breakfast with Santa

Saturday, December 12 | 8:00–10:00 AM

Station #41 | Deer Park

[For more details and event tickets, follow us on Facebook.](#)

Community CPR & AED Training

Spokane County Fire District 4 offers free Hands-Only CPR and AED classes to the community each quarter at locations throughout the district. These hands-on classes provide participants with practical experience in CPR and AED use. No certification is provided.

Children are encouraged to attend with a parent or guardian.

Final class of 2026:

December 18 | 3:00–5:00 PM

Station #49

[Register Online: scfd4.org](https://scfd4.org)

| EMS

District 4's Growing Role in EMS

Since May 2026, Spokane County Fire District 4's emergency medical transport service delivery model has changed. Prior to May, the District was served by two AMR ambulances. Today, service is provided by one AMR ambulance and one SCFD4 ambulance operating from Station 42, with additional SCFD4 reserve ambulances available for deployment from Stations 46 and 49 as needed.

This change has significantly increased the role SCFD4 plays in emergency medical transportation. Before the new service model, District crews averaged approximately 10 patient transports per month. Today, SCFD4 ambulances and personnel are providing approximately 90 transports per month.

As the district takes on a larger role in patient transportation, SCFD4 continues to adapt and grow with the changing EMS needs of our community.

WHAT CHANGED?

from 10 → 90
patient transports
per month
Since May 2026



| From the Chief

A Message to Our Community

As we move past the busy summer, we want to recognize the dedicated men and women of Spokane County Fire District 4. Day in and day out, they demonstrate professionalism, compassion, and a strong commitment to protecting our community.

This quarter's newsletter highlights our district's response to the Spokane Complex Fires, our members' ongoing fire prevention activities, and the organization's dedication to growth and continued improvement. Our organization prides itself on community engagement. That's why I wanted to remind everyone that our 2nd annual Fall Festival will be held at Station 44 in Mead, across from Cat Tails on Hwy 2 on Friday, October 23rd. See our Facebook page for more details.

Serving this community is both an honor and a privilege. Every member of our district understands that when you call for help, you are often experiencing one of the most difficult moments you will face. We take that responsibility seriously and remain committed to providing professional, compassionate, and timely service whenever and wherever it is needed.

Sincerely,

Mike Nokes, Fire Chief
Spokane County Fire District 4

