



# Fire District 4 FIRE & RESCUE

*Serving North Spokane County*

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[www.scf4.org](http://www.scf4.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 11, 2024, Edited March 28, 2024  
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### **Board of Fire Commissioners to meet on fire levy resolution**

*Community invited to learn more and provide comment*

Deer Park, Wash. – Spokane County Fire District 4 Board of Fire Commissioners is holding an open Q&A session on the proposed fire levy lid lift on Monday, March 25. This meeting will begin at 3:30pm at 315 E. Crawford St. in Deer Park (district office). Following the Q&A session, at 5pm at the same location, will be the Commissioners meeting to discuss the resolution to place a levy lid lift on the August 2024 primary election ballot. The public is invited to attend to learn more and provide comments.

Calls for emergency services were up 24 percent in the last three years – and in January emergency personnel responded to a record-high 409 calls, which is the highest number of calls for a January month in district history. The fire district responds to an average of 4,200 calls per year.

The fire levy funds fire prevention and suppression and EMS personnel and apparatus, while the smaller EMS levy helps pay for medical supplies and field equipment. The fire levy accounts for 70 percent of the fire district's budget.

Revenue from the current fire levy is not keeping up with the demand for and costs to provide emergency services. Costs increase by an average of 7.5 percent each year, but state law limits the fire district to just a 1 percent annual revenue increase.

"This is a safety issue for our community and its firefighters," Fire Chief Bill Neckels said. "We require additional emergency personnel to respond to the increased demand for services. In addition, we need to make station improvements and replace some fire engines to improve response times and ensure service reliability when responding to calls."

If approved by voters, the fire levy lid lift will fund additional Fire/EMS personnel to respond to higher call volumes, add a fire engine/ladder used for structural fire suppression, and replace three "urban interface engines" used for both structural and wildfire suppression. The lid lift will also remodel Station 47 (Green Bluff) to accommodate personnel and seasonal firefighters during wildland fire season to reduce response times.

Fire District 4 prefers to fund its needed projects without voter-approved debt such as a bond, which costs taxpayers more in interest payments. The fire levy lid lift would continue this cost-saving measure.

The fire district is considering asking voters to return the fire levy from \$1.16 to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The \$0.34 lid lift would cost an approximate additional \$11 per month or \$136 per year for the owner of a \$400,000 home.

Learn more at [www.scf4.org](http://www.scf4.org). Fire Chief Bill Neckels also welcomes your questions at 509-467-4500 or [billn@scfd4.org](mailto:billn@scfd4.org).

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*Spokane County Fire District 4 provides fire and life safety services to approximately 40,000 people over 330 square miles in north Spokane County, including the city of Deer Park. The fire district responds to an average of 4,200 calls each year – of which 72 percent are for emergency medical service (EMS). Call volumes have increased 24 percent in the last three years (2020-2023). The district's emergency personnel are highly trained to provide services for fire suppression and prevention, wildland firefighting, EMS and ambulance transport, vehicle accidents and extrication, hazardous material spills, and life safety programs. The district also is a fully qualified fire prevention bureau, providing commercial life safety inspections, construction plan review, public education, wildfire home ignition zone assessments, and fire investigations. Fire District 4 operates under a balanced budget and has passed all financial and accountability audits by the state.*