



GIG HARBOR FIRE & MEDIC ONE

10222 Bujacich Road NW, Gig Harbor 98332

(253) 851-3111 | www.gigharborfire.org

[f](#) GigHarborFire | [t](#) gigharborfire | [i](#) gig_harbor_fire_medic_one

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 27, 2022
Contact: Fire Chief Dennis Doan
(253) 851-3111 DDoan@gigharborfire.org

Call volumes continue to climb for Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One

EMS calls jump 8% in one year

[Gig Harbor, Wash.] – Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One shared 2021 call volumes for the Fire District that provides fire and life safety services to 53,000 people over 54 square miles. Emergency medical service (EMS) calls in 2021 were up 8% compared to the year before (4,578 to 4,945). Emergency calls in general increased 3% over last year (from 6,136 to 6,316).

“We are making improvements in how we provide service to meet this demand,” said Fire Chief Dennis Doan. “I’m incredibly proud of the dedicated emergency personnel, who are rising to the challenge.”

The Fire District recently completed a Standards of Cover Report, which identifies staffing needs for the community. Emergency personnel is funded out of the agency’s operating levies, which are capped at \$1.50 for fire suppression and \$0.50 for EMS. (Amounts listed are per \$1,000 of assessed property value.)

EMS accounts for 78% of all emergency calls, and the lid lift that maintains funding for the program will expire at the end of 2022. GHFMO anticipates asking the community to renew it at the same rate previously approved by voters. That ballot measure is likely to be on the November 2022 General Election ballot.

Another issue the agency is trying to address involves its outdated facilities. The Board of Fire Commissioners unanimously approved a Capital Facilities Plan in December of 2021. The project list is long and the Fire District realizes it can’t do everything at once.

“Adequate facilities are important to the delivery of emergency services, and this plan has been needed for a long time,” said Chief Doan. “These projects will improve the health and safety of our community and its firefighters.”

Priority projects include building a training facility, replacing one station and renovating two to four others depending on the cost. Capital projects are too expensive to fund out of the Fire District’s operating levies without significantly cutting emergency service levels. The Fire District is discussing the potential for a bond request on the August Primary Election ballot.

The discussion is timely considering January is Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month. Cancer is known to be a leading cause of death among firefighters. Some of GHFMO’s stations lack appropriate decontamination areas to remove soot, hydrocarbons and smoke from firefighting gear. There also is a need for space to decontaminate medical equipment after EMS calls.

"I feel strongly about providing a healthy and safe working environment for the women and men who put their lives on the line every day for our community," said Chief Doan. "I hope our community feels the same and sees this as a top priority for facility improvements."

###

Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 5 (known as Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One) provides fire and life safety services to 53,000 people over 54 square miles. The Fire District responded to a high of 6,685 calls in 2019. Calls for emergency responses have increased 42% since 2011. Through community support, Gig Harbor Fire & Medic One has built one of the most advanced emergency response systems in Pierce County with highly-trained personnel and rescue programs.