



Volume 17 Issue 5  
May, 2024



**Feature Stories**

- Levy Lid Lift
- Spring Fire Safety
- Years of Service
- New Hires
- April Calls

**2024 STATISTICS**  
*Apr 1 — Apr 30*

**District Average Response Time:**  
9 min. 47 sec.

**Responses by Type:**

Fire: 15  
EMS: 320  
Other: 126



*Proudly serving the communities of Blaine, Birch Bay, Custer, Laurel and the unincorporated areas of Lynden & Bellingham*

*“Providing Quality Service for a Safe Community”*



**North Whatcom Fire and Rescue**

1507 E. Badger Rd. | PO Box 286 | Lynden, WA 98264  
360 318-9933 | [www.nwfrs.net](http://www.nwfrs.net)

**Board of Fire Commissioners passes fire levy lid lift resolution**

*Proposition will appear on the August 6, 2024, primary election ballot*

The North Whatcom Fire and Rescue (NWFR) Board of Fire Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution to place a fire levy lid lift on the August 6, 2024, primary election ballot. The lid lift would fund additional firefighters to respond to higher call volumes and replace engines and equipment that have reached the end of their usable lives.

“Our call volumes have almost doubled in the last 10 years, and we need additional personnel to respond to calls,” Fire Chief Jason Van Der Veen said. “Revenue from our fire levy is not keeping up with the demand for emergency services.”

As a result, NWFR is experiencing longer response times. More firefighters and facility improvements are needed to handle the growing demand for emergency services and reduce response times.

If approved by voters, the fire levy lid lift would fund:

- Up to eight emergency personnel over six years to respond to higher call volumes, meet staffing requirements at fire stations, and put into service another response unit for EMS
- Replacement of a ladder truck and three engines that have reached the end of their usable lives

Hiring more personnel will allow the district to adequately staff its fire stations to decrease response times, as well as reduce reliance on mutual aid from other agencies. Having to rely on mutual aid puts additional strain on those agencies and can take longer to reach people in an emergency.

More staffing also means NWFR can put into service another response unit for medical emergencies. This is critical because EMS calls have increased by 50 percent and now account for most of all calls – 71 percent. When emergency personnel are out-of-service transporting patients to St. Joseph Hospital in Bellingham, NWFR must rely on mutual aid due to staffing shortages. This can delay response times for other emergency calls that come in during this time.

The lid lift would also help fund the replacement of Station 63 in Birch Bay (a bond may be needed to complete this project) to improve response times and service reliability in the area. Station 63 is the district’s busiest station.

The fire district is asking voters to change the fire levy from \$0.76 per \$1,000 of assessed property value to \$1.10. If approved by voters, this would be the first levy lid lift in almost 20 years.

The \$0.34 lid lift would cost the owner of a \$500,000 home an additional \$14.16 per month or \$170 per year.

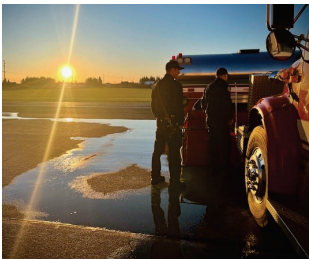
North Whatcom  
Fire and Rescue  
welcomes suggestions  
for upcoming  
newsletters. Please  
submit your ideas or  
suggestions to  
info@nwfrs.com

HAPPY  
*Mother's Day*

**March  
Top Responders**  
McDermott (60)  
Nelson (57)  
Placzek (51)

**1st QTR  
Top Responders**  
Freeman (154)  
Stamberger (149)  
Mulrooney (139)\*  
Nelson (139)\*

\* Tied



## Spring Cleaning For Fire Safety

### Important Fire Prevention Tips To Follow

The weather is warming, so it's time for spring cleaning! This year, don't forget to add some fire safety tips to your list. By following these simple tips, you can help reduce the risk of a fire happening in your home. Keep reading for our top tips on how to keep your family safe this spring!

One of the most important things you can do to prevent a fire is to keep your home clean. Dust and dirt can quickly build up and become combustible. Make sure to dust all surfaces, especially those that tend to collect dust, like bookshelves and window sills. Don't forget to vacuum regularly too! We've compiled a quick list of additional fire prevention and safety measures to include in your cleaning routine this year:

### Indoor Spring Cleaning Fire Safety Tips

When it comes to spring cleaning, mops, brooms, and dustpans quickly come to mind. Keeping fire prevention in mind as you go about your spring cleaning routine can help prevent a fire in the future. Check out these six indoor fire safety tips:

#### 1. Clear out any clutter from your home, especially in hallways and stairways.

Did you know that clutter provides fuel for a fire to spread? Make sure that all of your exits are clear and have a clear path to them. If you have any items blocking an exit, move them immediately. This ensures your family will have good escape routes should you need to evacuate due to fire.

#### 2. Check Your Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are working properly. Now is an excellent time to install them if you don't have any. Replace your carbon monoxide and smoke detector batteries and look for any

corrosion on the batteries or their connection points in the device. Replace the entire device if you notice any corrosion inside the battery compartment. Otherwise, supply your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors with a fresh set of batteries. North Whatcom Fire and Rescue has partnered with the [American Red Cross](#) to offer [free smoke alarms](#) to Whatcom County residents.

#### 3. Don't Use Electrical Appliances or Tools with Frayed Cords

If you have any electrical appliances or tools with frayed electrical cords, replace them as soon as possible. Using damaged electrical cords could start a fire. This is also an excellent time to check your extension cords too. Too many devices plugged in can overload the outlet and cause a fire.

#### 4. Check for Water Around Electrical Appliances

Check for water around electrical appliances, such as your washing machine, dryer, or dishwasher. If you notice any water, have a professional inspect your appliance to make sure it is safe to use.

#### 5. Check all of your appliances to make sure they are in good working condition.

This includes your stove, oven, microwave, toaster, coffee maker, and anything else you use daily. If you notice any issues with an appliance, have it repaired or replaced as soon as possible.

#### 6. It's a Great Time to Clean Your Clothes Dryer Vent & Lint Trap

Regularly clean your clothes dryer lint trap. Lint is highly combustible and can easily cause a fire if it isn't removed. Clean your dryer vent and hoses at once a year to remove and prevent any excess lint buildup or blockages.



### Outdoor Spring Cleaning Fire Safety Tips

While cleaning up your yard this spring, don't forget about fire safety. Here are a few outdoor spring cleaning tips to keep in mind:

#### 1. Trim any trees or bushes that are close to your home.

Trimming away any bushes or trees that are too close to your house creates a "defensible space" between your home and potential fire sources. Additionally, if you have dead or dying trees, now is an excellent time to remove them. Dead vegetation is highly flammable and can easily catch fire.

#### 2. Check Your Gas Grill for rust, worn parts, grease, and other debris before use

Grilling is a popular spring and summer activity, but it's essential to ensure your grill is clean and in safe operational order before firing it up for the first burger of the season. Remove any rust, grease, or debris built up over the winter. Inspect all parts to make sure they are in good working condition. If you notice any worn parts, have them replaced. It's a great time to check your grill's propane tank for gas leaks.

#### 3. Move The Grill at least 10ft Away from the House Before Use.

It's essential to keep your gas grill at least ten feet away from your home when in use. This will help prevent any accidental fires from happening. Additionally, make sure that the area around the grill is clear of any debris or flammable materials.

#### 4. Make sure your home's address is visible from the street.

If your home's address is not visible from the street, it will be difficult for emergency responders to find your home in the event of a fire or other emergencies. Make sure that your house number is visible and easy to read from the street. If you need to, repaint or replace your address sign.



# Completed Years of Service Anniversaries at NWFR

| April                | Position    | Years of Service |
|----------------------|-------------|------------------|
| John Hollstein       | Lieutenant  | 18               |
| Adam Smith           | Captain     | 18               |
| Scott Brown          | Lieutenant  | 17               |
| Tony Esser           | Lieutenant  | 17               |
| Danny Jensen         | Lieutenant  | 17               |
| Jason Donnelly       | Firefighter | 17               |
| Mike Lyshol          | Firefighter | 17               |
| Haley Urling-Ehinger | Firefighter | 8                |
| <b>May</b>           |             |                  |
| Rob Mulrooney        | Lieutenant  |                  |



CONGRATS



**Events to Celebrate May Birthdays**

- 9 – Mark Lann
- 25 – Melissa Van Cleave
- 26 – Scott Fischer
- 27 – Brian Carlson

**NWFR Meetings**

Thurs. May 16  
 9408 Odell St 61  
 Blaine — 10:30 a.m.

**District 4 Meetings (via Zoom)**

Mon. May 13  
 4142 Britton Loop St 12  
 Bellingham — 12:00 p.m.



## NWFR Hires Five New Career Firefighters

North Whatcom Fire and Rescue is excited to welcome five new members.

my in North Bend in early May for three month.

before moving to a temporary shift for the probationary year.

The recruits will attend the Washington State Fire Acade-

Upon their return, they will receive some intense emergency medical services (EMS) training



From left to right: Alex Ojukwu, Cole Heili, Anthony Marra, Andrew Veith and Benjamin Mouser.





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a safe community



### CPR / AED Classes 2024

Class will be held at various  
fire stations around the dis-  
trict. Check out  
[https://www.nwfrs.net/cpr-  
course/](https://www.nwfrs.net/cpr-course/)  
for more information and to  
reserve your spot.

*Donations of nonperishable food  
items are encouraged but not man-  
datory. All food donations will be  
forwarded to local area food bank*

### CPR/AED

**None offered at this  
time**

Bellingham Whatcom..

@BWCFFBF

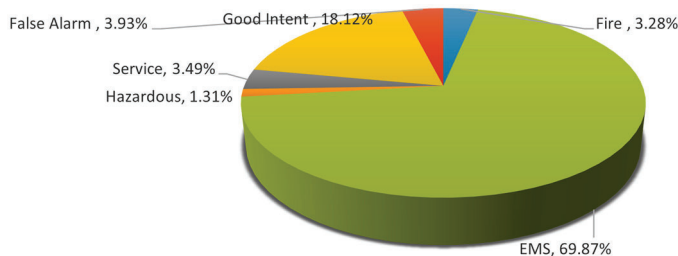


**venmo**

Benevolent Fund  
Donation Link

# April Calls

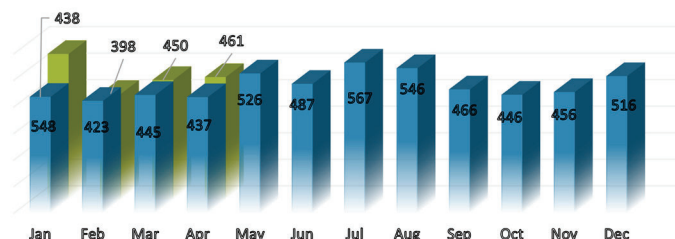
461



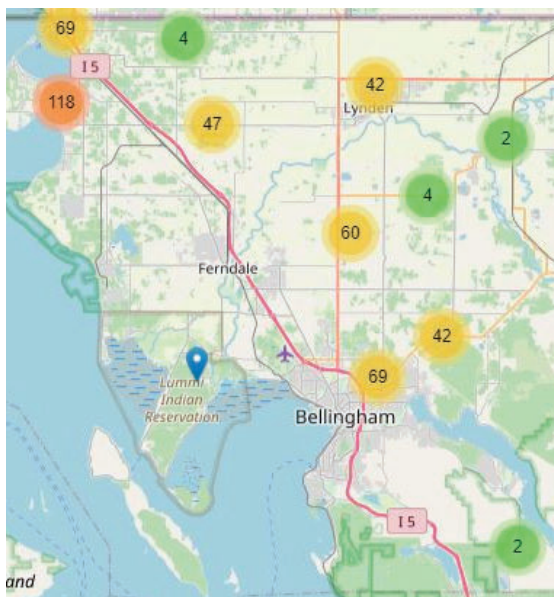
## Types of Calls

False Alarms = 18

■ Fire ■ EMS ■ Hazardous ■ Service ■ Good Intent ■ False Alarm

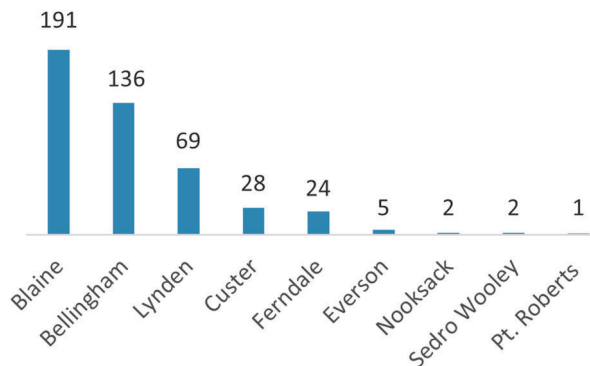


## Location of Calls

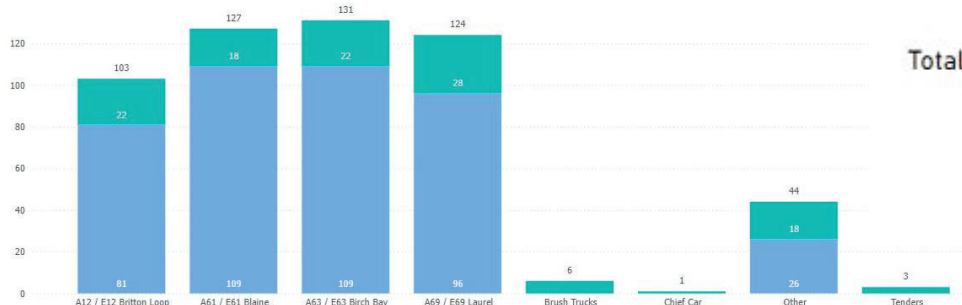


### Average Calls Per Day

15.90



Dispatch Category ■ EMS ■ Fire



### Total Overlapping Calls

165