



Volume 18 Issue 1

January, 2025



Feature Stories

- Support Officers
- Call Volume by Year
- Winter Fires
- Project Santa

2024 STATISTICS

Dec 1 — Dec 31

District Average Response Time:

9 min. 29 sec.

Responses by Type:

Fire: 11

EMS: 332

Other: 124



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

“Providing Quality Service for a Safe Community”

Support Officer Community Care Vital Service



MISSION

The mission of Support Officer Community Care is to impact and influence the quality of life for families experiencing tragedy and trauma in our community, and the First Responders who serve them.

ABOUT THEM

Support Officers Community Care of Whatcom County was created in 1982 by a local pastor and fire chief who recognized the need for personal outreach to individuals and families in times of tragedy and trauma. They recognized that no one is immune and crisis and that it can strike anyone at any time. The goal of this program is to care for all members of our community to help them cope and eventually thrive following a crisis.

The mission of Support Officers is to impact and influence the quality of life for families experiencing tragedy and trauma. They help those left grieving to understand what to expect in the days and months ahead following a crisis. We strive to provide care when an

individual’s normal psychological and biological coping mechanisms are threatened.

What Is A Support Officer?

No one is immune from crisis. Tragedy or sudden death can strike anyone at any time. Support Officers help those left grieving understand what to expect in the days and months ahead following a crisis. This program exists to provide care when an individual’s normal psychological and biological coping mechanisms are threatened. Support Officers offer their services free of charge, regardless of one’s financial situation. However, they depend on individual and corporate donations to provide this level of care.

In times of trauma, Support Officers also assist Whatcom County’s first responders. Their response unit provides a shelter during a rescue effort or at a traffic fatality. Support Officers also help first responders manage their personal stress triggered by critical incidents. The goal of this program is to care for all members of the community to help them to survive and eventually thrive following a crisis. People from around the world have thanked them for the helpful resources on grief that are provided on their website.

Support Officer Community Care is a nonprofit, not a public agency. Although they work

in tandem with our county’s first responders, they don’t receive any tax funding. They depend on individual and corporate donations to meet their budget needs. Their board consists of individuals who care about first responders and people in crisis.

Frequently Asked Questions Who do Support Officers help?

They help people in our community when they experience tragedy or trauma. This may be family crisis intervention, school crisis response, or on-scene support of first responders and families. Support Officers often follow up with families and individuals for months following their crisis.

When do they go out to a scene?

They are dispatched by the 911 operator when there is a disaster, accident, death notification, or other traumatic event where their training and expertise serve to care for and comfort victims, families, and the first responders.

What kind of training do Support Officers receive?

Support Officers are trained in areas such as crisis response and intervention, incident command systems, critical incident stress, school crisis

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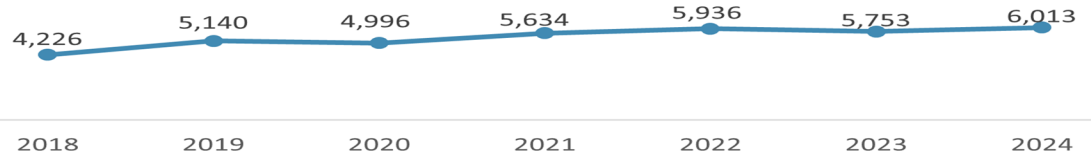
North Whatcom
Fire and Rescue
welcomes suggestions
for upcoming
newsletters. Please
submit your ideas or
suggestions to
info@nwfrs.com



2025
Happy New Year



NWFR Call Volume by Year



Put a FREEZE on Winter Fires

Home fires occur more in winter than in any other season. As you stay cozy and warm this winter, be fire smart!

Half of all home heating fires occur in December, January and February.

Heating equipment is involved in **1 in every 6** home fires and **1 in every 5** home fire deaths.

Keep anything that can burn **at least 3 feet** from any heat source like fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators or space heaters.

Keep portable generators **outside, away from windows, and as far away** from your home as possible.

Install and test carbon monoxide alarms **at least once a month**.

Plug only **1 heat-producing appliance** (like a space heater) into an electrical outlet at a time.

Have a qualified professional clean and inspect your chimney and vents **every year**.

Store cooled ashes in a tightly covered metal container, and keep it **outside at least 10 feet** from your home and any nearby buildings.



For more information on how to prevent winter fires, visit usfa.fema.gov/winter and nfpa.org/winter.

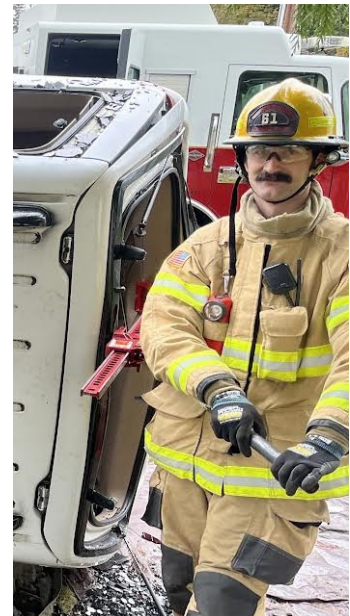


Project Santa

Since 1979, the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office has been blessed to be able to provide a little holiday magic to children in Whatcom County through Project Santa Claus. They coordinate with every county public school's resource staff and offer eligible families the opportunity to participate.

NWFR had the privilege of joining other first responding agencies in Whatcom County on Saturday, December 7 to help out with **Project Santa Claus - Whatcom County** making the holidays a little merrier for some local families! A huge thank you to those who planned, organized, and volunteered for this amazing event!

This year was one for the books; with about 30 volunteers and about 63 local first responders they were able to help a record 151 kids this year!



Events to Celebrate January Birthdays

- 5 – John Hollstein
- 13 – Steven Latbam
- 18 – Alden Roberts
- 25 – Collin Thomas
- 26 – Ben Mouser
- 27 – Ryan Mack

NWFR Meetings will be conducted in person

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

District 4 Meetings continue to be conducted via Zoom with some in person

Tues. Jan. 13
4142 Britton Loop St 12
Bellingham — 12:00 p.m.

Support Officers cont.

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response, and on-scene procedures for suicide, SIDS, homicide, death investigation, and shootings.

What is their greatest challenge?

The overwhelming increase in calls is their greatest challenge. In the past two years, the number of calls has increased 49%. Support Officers are particularly needed by families immediately after an infant death, and in the past two years the number of infant deaths has increased 100%. This increase in calls strains financial resources and limits their ability to provide much needed physical comforts to grieving families with limited funds.

How can you offer support?

Donate today! Your donation is tax deductible and will go a long way to help us.

Where do your gifts go?

Given their non-profit status, Support Officer Community Care, not surprisingly, relies heavily on donations. They are ever mindful of being good stewards of the funds they receive and vigilant in making sure money donated goes directly to services for the families we serve.

Tax deductible donations to SOCC go towards needs such as: funeral arrangements, travel and transportation costs, hotel accommodations, food, and discretionary necessities on

scene and/or in the immediate aftermath.

Additional funding is used for resource materials relating to death and trauma, crisis training for the support volunteers and first responders. The contributions made from our community stay in our community, and are provided directly as a means of support, and often guidance, during times of crisis.

For more information visit

www.supportofficer.org/





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PO Box 286
Lynden, WA 98264

Providing quality service for
a safe community



CPR / AED Classes 2025

Class will be held at various
fire stations around the district. Check out

<https://www.nwfrs.net/cpr-course/>

for more information and
to reserve your spot.

Donations of nonperishable food
items are encouraged but not mandatory. All food donations will be
forwarded to local area food
banks.

CPR/AED

None offered at this
time

Bellingham Whatcom..

@BWCFFBF

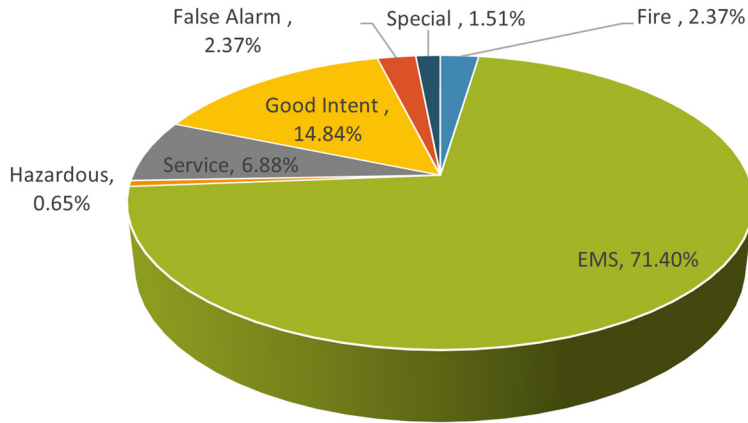


venmo

Benevolent Fund
Donation Link

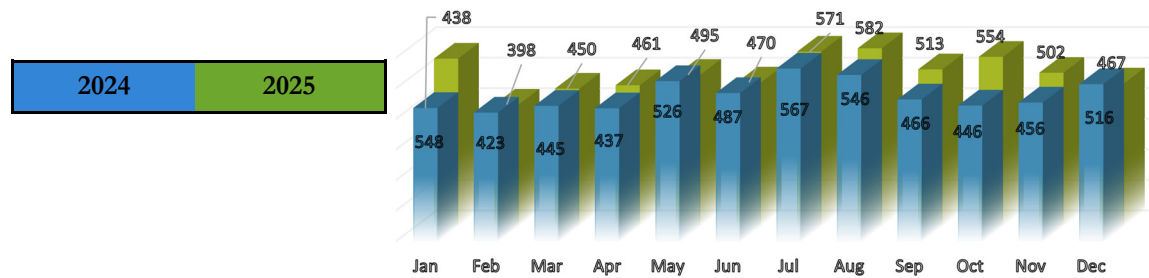
December Calls

Total Calls = 467

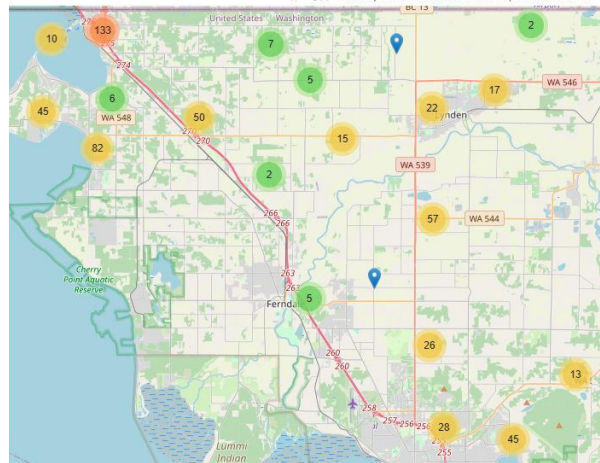


Types of Calls

False Alarms = 11

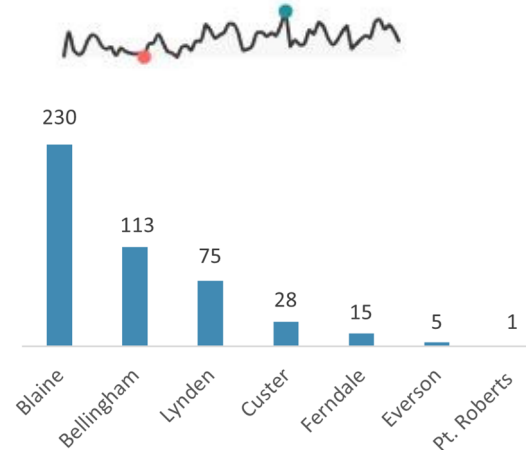


Location of Calls

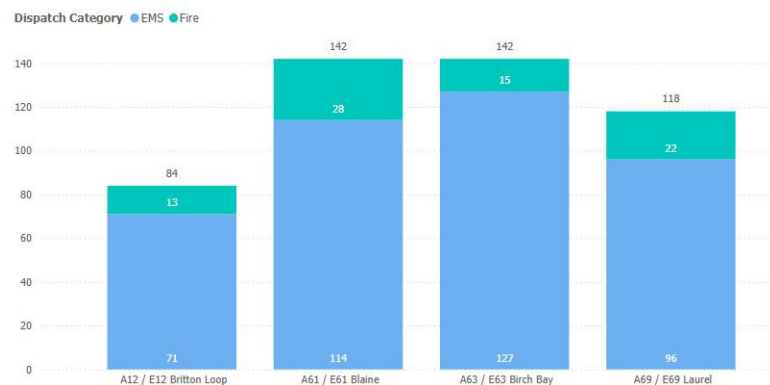


Average Calls Per Day

15.57



Apparatus Responses



Total Overlapping Calls

151