



SKAGIT COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 8

skagitfire8.org • 360-724-4703

SUMMER 2026



Josh Carpenter, Fire Chief

A Message from the Fire Chief

We appreciate your support for Skagit County Fire District 8. As emergency service demand continues to grow, the district is working to maintain reliable response coverage, address rising costs, and plan for future equipment and staffing needs.

Call volumes have increased 57.7% since 2019. More calls mean added costs, and inflation has increased expenses for items like firefighter safety gear, utilities, fuel, and equipment.

Skagit 8 also contracts with the City of Sedro-Woolley to cover underserved areas in the district. That contract cost rose 57% from 2024 to 2025 and requires additional short-term funding. Long term, the district aims to build a station, staff its own crews, and reduce reliance and costs from outside support.

Another challenge is replacing aging apparatus. Three fire engines and two water tenders are nearing the end of their service lives, increasing maintenance costs and reducing reliability. We prefer to pay cash for apparatus instead of financing, which costs taxpayers more in interest. While funds have been saved, reserves are not yet sufficient for full replacement.

The Board of Fire Commissioners has placed a lid lift on the August 4, 2026 primary election ballot. If approved, the fire levy would return to \$1.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value – the same rate voters approved in 2019. Funding would allow the district to hire two additional full-time firefighters to improve coverage, reduce payments to the city of Sedro-Woolley to answer our calls, and allow the district to replace emergency apparatus.

The cost would be about \$9 per month, or \$108 per year, for a \$300,000 home. A chart showing costs for different property values, additional levy information, and answers to frequently asked questions are available at skagitfire8.org/levy-information or by scanning the QR code beside this article.

Questions are welcome at jcarpenter@skagitfire8.org or 360-724-4703. Thank you for considering our request.



Celebrate Safely: Fireworks Safety Tips



A few simple precautions can help prevent fires and injuries this July 4th. Keep these safety tips in mind:

- **Consider attending a public fireworks display.** Professional shows are conducted by trained crews using specialized safety procedures.
- **Keep water nearby.** Have a hose or bucket of water ready in case of sparks or small fires.
- **Supervise children closely.** Young children should never handle fireworks, including sparklers, which can cause serious burns.
- **Soak used fireworks before disposal.** Place spent fireworks in water before throwing them away.
- **Keep pets safely secured.** Fireworks can frighten pets and cause them to run away. Keep them indoors and make sure they are wearing identification.

Using fireworks responsibly helps protect your family, neighbors, pets, and community while keeping the holiday safe and enjoyable for everyone.



20464 Prairie Rd.
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Mailed From 98642
Permit No. 94

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Fire protection in rural communities depends on people stepping forward to serve. SCFD8 is deeply grateful for the volunteer firefighters who help protect our community, often balancing training, emergency calls, work, and family responsibilities to respond when neighbors need help.

Volunteer firefighters are a vital part of the district's response system. They train regularly, respond to emergencies, and work alongside career staff to ensure help is available across the district.

When major incidents occur, the response often extends beyond one department. During a recent house fire in the district, several agencies responded, demonstrating the strong partnerships that help protect lives and property throughout the region. SCFD8 greatly appreciates the surrounding fire departments that assist when large incidents happen.

At the same time, the district is working toward strengthening its own staffing levels so more calls can be handled by local crews. Currently, SCFD8 contracts with the City of Sedro-Woolley for some emergency coverage, and those costs have increased significantly in recent years.

This is one reason the district will have a fire levy lid lift on the August ballot. If approved by voters, the funding would support hiring additional firefighters and improving response coverage within the district.

In the meantime, the district continues to rely on the dedication of its volunteers. If you have ever considered serving your community, we encourage you to get involved.

To learn more about becoming a volunteer firefighter, call 360-724-4703.

