

III. Community Communications and Risk Reduction



DRAFT

The District website is a vital communication hub designed to enhance engagement with the community and its members.

Goal: *Strengthen our involvement with the community.*

Objective: *To identify, evaluate and offer appropriate risk management programs to mitigate anticipated community hazards.*

Strategies:

COORDINATION AND SUPPORT: This program is one of the team of programs that collectively work to achieve the District’s mission. It is expected that through policy direction, communication and coordination it will support these mutual efforts in an efficient and effective manner. The District programs include:

- Finance and administration (Fire Chief & District Secretary);
- Incident Readiness & Response (Assistant Chief);
- Facilities & Equipment;
- Community Outreach & Communications;
- Health & Wellness; and
- Training & Education.

RESPONSIBILITY: Fire Chief and program level managers.

FREQUENCY: Annually during the budgeting process, monthly coordination with individual and joint coordination meetings (e.g. program meetings with the Fire Chief and Assistant Chief-Battalion Chief meetings) and as needed.

WEB SITE: The District web site is a vital communications hub designed to enhance engagement with the community and its members. The website includes:

- Board meeting information (time, location, minutes, agenda);
- Virtual meetings: links to live ZOOM meetings and archived video recordings;
- Member resources: training site access and essential links for current members;
- Recruitment information: details about positions, training, obligations, dates for recruitment and more;
- Community services: on-line requests for address markers and on-line contact forms, service options (smoke detectors, CPR training schedule, blood pressure checks, etc.), facility usages (detailed information and on-line request forms);
- Educational visits: contact details for firestation tours, field trips and school assemblies;
- Regulatory information: open burning rules, permit forms and safety regulations;
- Upcoming date notices: meetings, voting reminders and local events;
- Safety education: fire prevention, emergency preparedness and fireworks safety;
- Updates: information on wildfires, weather, health advisories and more;
- Safety messages, fire prevention, emergency preparedness and fireworks safety (information & links); and
- Multimedia: instructional videos as needed for further engagement.

RESPONSIBILITY: District Secretary/designee; input provided by key staff.

The District regularly supports ongoing risk reduction programs and public educational opportunities.

FREQUENCY: General information is permanently on website, updates to be made as needed.

NEWSLETTER: The District will distribute a one-page newsletter multiple times annually featuring:

- District highlights: displaying District activities and members using several photographs;
- Key developments within the District;
- Recruitment advertisements;
- Service reminders of the services we provide; and
- Community engagement: calls for support and involvement.

RESPONSIBILITY: District Secretary/designee. Input provided by key staff.

FREQUENCY: Quarterly.

READERBOARD: The reader board will display:

- Board meeting schedules;
- Event reminders;
- Safety tips;
- Service highlights; and
- Inspirational messages.

RESPONSIBILITY: District Secretary/designee. Input provided by key staff.

FREQUENCY: Weekly, on-going.

COMMUNITY EVENTS: We will leverage community events for positive outreach and communications. Event to include:

- School functions: assemblies, classroom visits, open houses, egg-drop, holiday events and end-of-year events; and
- Local community functions: local parades, Fourth of July events, Strawberry Festival, homeowner meetings and other events as scheduled.

RESPONSIBILITY: District Secretary/Community Outreach Team (“COT”) Coordinator/COT members.

FREQUENCY: As needed monthly.

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SOCIAL MEDIA: Social media is a powerful tool to connect with our community. It can be used to raise public awareness about fire safety, provide real-time updates during emergencies, engage with the community, increase transparency and aid in recruitment efforts. We will use social media platforms like *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *Nextdoor* to connect with our community for targeted, meaningful updates and entertaining on-shift highlights. Timely messages will be scheduled using *Hootsuite* software and archived using *Pagefreezer* software.

RESPONSIBILITY: District Secretary/COT Coordinator/COT members.

FREQUENCY: Weekly/as needed.

PRESS RELEASES: Press releases can be used when necessary to communicate major announcement and typically run for a brief, limited time.

RESPONSIBILITY: District Secretary/designee, Fire Chief.

FREQUENCY: As needed.

Personal contact, outside of emergency responses, are a desirable means of communicating proactively.

PERSONAL OUTREACH: Personalized contact through calls, emails or visits can be used for direct engagement, especially during emergency responses, to provide safety tips and information about our services.

- Responders can make personal contact on emergency calls when appropriate (e.g. on a patient fall incident to provide recommendations and hand-outs to mitigate future falls);
- Responders could also provide a general hand-out that covers all other services we provide;
- As time allows, on-duty crews can dialogue with community members to see if they have any questions or concerns about their fire department;
- The District will maintain contact information on neighborhood associations and community groups in the area. District representatives can attend community homeowners' group meetings to provide updates and answer questions;
- Community questions from website, emails or calls should be answered in a timely manner; and
- When necessary, the District should hold community town-hall style meetings to provide specific information regarding pertinent topics (e.g. ballot measures, new large scale projects). These meetings should be well advertised and targeted.

RESPONSIBILITY: Varies (Responders, Career Staff, District Secretary, Fire Chief/designee, Board and COT members).

FREQUENCY: As needed.

Additional Strategies:

RISK IDENTIFICATION: NFPA 1300, *Standard on Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan Development*, defines CRR as a process to identify and prioritize local risks, followed by the strategic investment of resources to reduce their occurrence and impact. Even though Thurston County has adopted a countywide *Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, Hazards Identification and Vulnerability Assessment* and *Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*, the District should consider performing its own community-wide risk assessment to identify specific and significant risks and focus on localized reduction methods.