



Frequently Asked Questions

How does Evergreen Fire Rescue operate today?

The Evergreen Fire Protection District (EFPD), dba Evergreen Fire/Rescue (EFR) covers approximately 121 square miles spanning parts of both Jefferson County and Clear Creek County. Established in 1948, EFR serves the unincorporated communities of Evergreen and Kittredge, which have a total population of 26,000 people, 12,000 homes and over 600 commercial businesses.

Mission Statement: Protect life, property, and the environment through prevention, preparedness, education and emergency response.

Vision: Achieve our highest potential by:

- Recognizing change in our community and respond accordingly.
- Cultivating a safe and effective environment for the public and our Team Members.
- Creating a positive work environment through effective internal communication, relationships and leadership.
- Striving to be role models in the community and leaders in our profession.
- Promoting responsible stewardship of the resources afforded to us by the community.
- Utilizing technologies and methods to evaluate and enhance current practices.

Values:

- Respect and Integrity
- Effective Communication
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Team Work
- Encourage and value all contributions
- Commitment and Pride

The EFPD is a Colorado Revised Statute Title 32 Article 1 Special District governed by five elected board members and managed by the Fire Chief. EFR has 32 full time employees, 15 part time employees and over 80 volunteer firefighters. The paid staff consists of the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) division, the Fire Prevention Division, the Communications division, the Maintenance division and Administration. EMS consists of twelve full time Paramedics and ten part time Paramedics managed by an EMS Coordinator. The Fire Prevention division consists of a Fire Inspector and a Fire Marshal. The Communications division consists of eight full time Communication Specialists, five part time Communication Specialists and a Communications Manager. The Maintenance division consists of a Mechanic/Facilities Technician, a Lead Mechanic and a Maintenance Manager. The Administration division consists of a Human Resource Specialist who also serves as an Office Manager, a Training Coordinator who also assists Fire Prevention with inspections and community education, a Staff Accountant, and an Administrative Assistant. The Evergreen Volunteer Fire Department (EVFD) is a 501(c)4 non-

profit organization supported by the EFPD. All of the volunteer firefighters are required to be residents of the EFPD per the EVFD By-Laws.

EFR maintains eight stations strategically located throughout the EFPD:

STATION 1 – Downtown and Hwy 73

Engine 131	Pumper
Rescue 141	Utility/Fire Rescue
Pump 181	Pump Truck
Brush 151	Brush
Tanker 161	Tanker
Tanker 171	Tanker
Utility 191	Utility, Medical Transport

STATION 2 - Bergen Park

Rescue 142	Heavy Rescue
Engine 132	Pumper
Tanker 162	Tanker
Brush 152	Brush
Tower 182	Aerial, Pumper
Utility 192	Utility/Medical Transport
Medic 112	Ambulance
Medic 122	Ambulance

STATION 3 – Hwy 73 and S. Turkey Creek Road

Tender 173	Forestry Tender
Engine 133	Pumper
Brush 153	Brush
Investigations	Investigations

STATION 4 – Skyline and Hwy 73

Medic 114	Ambulance
Medic 124	Ambulance
Utility 194	Utility

STATION 5 - Upper Bear Creek Road and Echo Lake Road

Engine 135	Pumper, Urban Interface, CAFS
Tender 175	Forestry Tender

STATION 6 - Kittredge

Engine 136	Pumper
Brush 156	Self-Contained Attack Truck

STATION 7 – County Road 65 and I-70

Engine 137	Pumper, Urban Interface, CAFS
Brush 157	Self-Contained Attack Truck
Tender 177	Forestry Tender

STATION 8 - Brook Forest Road and Forest Estates Road

Engine 138	Pumper, Urban Interface, CAFS
Tender 178	Forestry Tender

Two stations are staffed with two Paramedics each, 24/7. Two Communications Specialists staff the Communications Center 24/7. The firefighters do not staff stations or fill shifts. They operate under a “respond when needed” system, sometimes referred to as a “neighborhood response”, which serves the 121 square miles of the EFPD very well. Having a firefighter in your neighborhood that can respond quickly to offer assistance results in short response times. The eight stations are located strategically throughout the district, allowing responding personnel access to apparatus and equipment in each corner and central to our response area.

Why is the EFPD asking for a mill levy increase?

Since the economic decline in 2008 and the continuing reduction in EMS transport receipts, EFR has used alternate funding mechanisms and its reserve funds to maintain operations. Property tax revenue has declined each year, starting in 2011 and reaching a low point in 2015. Changes to Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements as well as other EMS unrecoverable debt have driven transport receipts to as low as 44% of dollars invoiced. We have reached a point of not being able to fund operations fully, or the reserve account sufficiently and of not being able to absorb the further revenue losses of our EMS division.

The inability of EFR to sufficiently fund our reserves has impacted our ability to fund future capital improvement projects such as engine and response vehicle replacement, facility repair and maintenance, and firefighting/rescue/EMS equipment replacement.

How is property tax calculated?

Property tax = (market value of property) X (assessment rate) X (mill levy)

For example, in order to calculate the residential property tax on a \$400,000 home, the market value of the property is multiplied by the assessment rate and the mill levy. By multiplying the value of the home (\$400,000) by the residential assessment rate (7.96%), we get the assessment value (\$31,840), or the amount of value subject to taxation. This amount multiplied by the mill levy equals total tax liability. Using a mill levy rate of 10 mills for this example, the total tax burden for a \$400,000 home would be \$318.40.

A commercial property valued at \$400,000 would be subject to the same formula, but would be taxed on 29% of its worth, or \$116,000. Multiplied by the 10 mills, the total tax liability for the commercial property would be \$1,160.

How is the market value of a property determined for purposes of property taxes?

Under the Gallagher Amendment, the county assessor of the county in which they are located must reassess properties every two years. Market values are determined based on recent sales of similar property in the area.

What is the assessment rate?

The assessment rate, sometimes called the assessment ratio, is the percentage of the property's assessed value that is taxed. For example, under Gallagher, the assessment rate for nonresidential property is fixed at 29%. This means that of the total market value of the property, 29% is subject to taxation. The residential property assessment rate floats each year in order to meet the 45/55 split mandated by Gallagher. Because of rapidly increasing residential property values, the residential assessment rate has sunk from approximately 21% in 1982 to 7.96% today.

What is a mill levy?

A mill levy is a property tax rate based on dollars per thousand of assessed valuation. For example, a mill levy of 10 means \$10 of tax per \$1,000 in assessed value. Mill levies are levied by a taxing district such as a school district or fire district on property owners in the district. By law, each taxing district must set a single mill levy that applies uniformly to all property within the district.

How is the EFPD funded today?

In 2016, the mill levy for the Evergreen Fire Protection District totaled 9.026. A property tax mill levy of 7.626 mills funds EFR operations, .034 mills is for refunds and abatements and 1.366 mills pays a bond debt. In 2016, EFPD will receive approximately \$3,600,000 in property tax revenue.

A 2.1 mills increase for operations funding was voted on and approved in 2005, raising the mill levy from 5.526 to its current 7.626. An additional 1.366 mills fund a bond debt approved by the community in 2002. The bond paid for the construction of Station 5 at Upper Bear Creek Road and Echo Lake Drive, Station 6 in Kittredge, Station 7 at CR 65 and I-70, Station 8 in Brook Forest and for the trucks and equipment in these stations. The bond also paid for the administration building, the live burn training building, expansion of Station 2 and the maintenance building all at the Bergen Park campus. The bond was refinanced in 2013, reducing the district's debt by \$600,000 and will be repaid in full in 2022.

The second largest funding source has been EMS transport fees. EFR invoices approximately \$1,000,000 each year for EMS transports to area hospitals. Other revenue comes from our regional dispatching service, our regional vehicle maintenance service, fire prevention service fees, donations and grants.

EFR will require an additional 3.5 mills to make up for property tax losses, to fully fund EMS and to keep pace with rising expenses.

Does the EFPD have a Capital Reserve and what is it used for?

EFR does have a capital reserve that has approximately \$3,500,000 allocated to two separate funds that exist within the general fund. The Strategic Capital fund at the beginning of 2016 has \$1,697,797 and the Apparatus Replacement fund has approximately \$1,828,069. These funds are used to support the replacement of emergency and administration equipment and the replacement and refurbishment of the fire trucks, ambulances and fleet vehicles. Each of these funds are based off of replacement and repair schedules calculated out 30 years to ensure we have funds to support the organizations forecasted capital needs.

What areas of the budget have been cut back?

EFR has taken dramatic steps within each division's budget to spread out the impact of lower revenues. Most areas of the general budget have been cut back, to include:

- Salaries frozen in 2015 and 2016
- Apparatus replacements pushed out to later dates
- Fleet vehicle use restricted
- Equipment replacement pushed out to later dates
- Paid employee positions eliminated with the duties taken on by other positions
- Paid staff and volunteer staff benefits cut
- Out of state trainings restricted

What has caused EMS transport revenue to drop for the fire district?

Changes in state and federal laws through the years and an aging population in Evergreen have increased the number of individuals covered by Medicare and Medicaid. Residents over the age of 60 are 68% of EFR's patient population. EFR's Medicaid patient population is up 540% in the

last two years. When EFR invoices Medicare and Medicaid, our receipts equal 30% and 5% respectively of what was billed. We are legally not allowed to invoice the individual transported as we are with private insurance. Invoiced receipts have dropped from a high in 2008 of 70% to a low in 2013 of 44%. Increases in transport fees have brought this back up to approximately 50%. Projections indicate that receipts will continue to drop in the future.

How many paid positions have been combined or not filled and what new positions are needed?

Fire Prevention did not fill the Community Educator position. The Training Coordinator was asked to split his time between the positions of Community Educator and Fire Inspector. The Training Coordinator is also acting as a Public Information Officer, Safety Officer and grant writer.

Human Resource, previously contracted, has been combined with the Office Manager position.

With the threat of wildland fire in our community being identified as a top priority in our Strategic Plan, EFR believes a new position is required for a Wildfire Subject Expert. This individual will work with Fire Prevention to continue to develop Community Wildfire Prevention and Implementation Plans (CWPIP's), assist with mitigation education efforts and increase community education. The individual will also work with Fire Operations, participating in wildland fire deployments, helping the firefighters work towards National Wildfire Cooperators Group certifications and invaluable wildfire training.

What has the EFRPD been doing to address the lack of funds for general operations?

- EFR has slashed expenses and frozen wages
- EFR has generated additional revenue by contracting dispatching services for five of the mountain area fire districts.
- EFR has contracted apparatus maintenance with many mountain agencies.
- EFR has applied a fee schedule for fire prevention services as well as contracting our fire prevention services out to other agencies.
- EFR charges for facilities use, excluding non-profit organizations, and for motor vehicle accident rescue response to the at-fault, out of district drivers.
- EFR actively seeks and applies for local, state and federal grants to fund large projects, training and equipment replacement.

What happens if the mill levy does not pass?

The district would not have the funding available to support operations fully or to fully fund the capital reserve accounts. Depletion of the capital reserve accounts will force us to find other means to fund apparatus replacement, such as more costly lease programs or additional elections requesting funding more often from voters. EFR will also be forced to reduce and limit services currently provided.

Why does the EFRPD need to replace or remodel Station 1?

Station 1, at 4751 Hwy 73, was built in 1966. Until 2004, this was the home of the administration offices. Station 1 protects the heart of downtown Evergreen and is one of EFR's primary stations. The location of this station has become problematic as the traffic load increases through this area of Hwy. 73. With the potential that the road may be widened in the future, the station construction would require it to be placed much farther back into the hillside.

It is on a lot, which was dug out of the hillside and has limited room for expansion. EFR is considering alternate sites for station 1. The existing station will also not accommodate current fire apparatus as the bay doors are not tall enough and the bays are not deep enough. The EFRPD is considering a second bond request to cover the potential cost of a new property and the construction of a new station. A \$5,000,000 bond would add a mill levy of approximately 0.7 to the request for a mill levy increase.

Where can I find additional information about the Evergreen Fire Protection District?

Additional information can be found at www.evergreenfirerescue.com or by calling the EFR administration office during regular business hours at 303-674-3145.