



# CLALLAM 2 FIRE-RESCUE

P.O. Box 1391, Port Angeles, WA 98362 • 360-457-2550 • [www.clallamfire2.org](http://www.clallamfire2.org)

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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### **Clallam 2 Fire-Rescue placing two Propositions on August 6, 2024 Ballot**

Port Angeles, WA – Clallam 2 Fire-Rescue will be placing two Propositions on the August 6, 2024, ballot. Proposition 1 will be for a Lid Lift of our regular levy and Proposition 2 will be for an EMS Levy. Both of these Propositions are critical to sustain the Fire District's current and future service levels.

Only voters within Clallam 2 Fire-Rescue will see these Propositions on the primary ballot in August. Our service area covers the unincorporated area surrounding Port Angeles. Our boundaries are roughly Deer Park Road on the east, and Lake Sutherland to the west. We also provide services out Highway 112 to Eden Valley Road. This includes the communities of Deer Park, Gales Addition, Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Angeles, Black Diamond, Dry Creek, Elwha, Lake Sutherland, and Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe properties.

#### Proposition 1 – Levy Lid Lift

The Fire District's primary source of funding is our regular Levy. This accounts for 83% of all the revenue the Fire District receives annually and it is based on a rate which is

applied to the assessed property value of the residents within the Fire District. The current rate is \$0.96 per thousand of assessed value. Proposition 1 will be asking for a Levy Lid lift to \$1.50 per thousand of assessed value.

The Fire District Levy is restricted to collecting only 1% more revenue from the previous year. Even if your home values increase by 5, 10, 15% or higher, you still only pay 1% more each year for your Fire Levy. This rate does not keep pace with inflation and the cost to provide the vital service our crews handle each day.

In 2020, voters approved a Levy rate of \$1.36 per thousand dollars of assessed value. Due to inflation and increasing property values, as well as the restriction to only increase by 1% additional revenue per year, the levy rate dropped in 2024 to \$0.96 per thousand. The Levy increase in 2020 was to fund additional staffing and equipment purchases. Since 2022, the Fire District was able to start part-time staffing of Fire Station 22 in Dry Creek with career staff M-Th 7 AM- 6 PM during peak demand times. The Fire District was also able to purchase a replacement fire engine and water tender to replace vehicles that were over 30 years old. The goals of the 2020 levy have been met and this proposed Levy Lid Lift in 2024 will sustain those improvements and continue building improved services.

The highest priority for a successful Fire Levy Lid Lift for Clallam 2 Fire-Rescue is to ensure the long-term stability of the Fire District's operations. This will include;

- Refilling the vacant Deputy Fire Chief Position. This position was vacated in early 2024 when the current Deputy Chief left for a position in another fire department. Budget constraints forced the decision to not refill this position until additional revenue can be secured.
- Fully fund a Capital Purchase program for the replacement of our vehicles, equipment, and facility master planning.
- Sustainable funding for our Volunteer Training Coordinator. This position was grant funded until the end of 2023 and now is being funded by our regular budget.
- Recruitment and retention of our volunteer firefighters and EMTs
- Sustain funding for our current career staff of four firefighter/paramedics and five firefighter/EMTs

### Proposition 2 – EMS Levy

An Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy is a property tax approved by the voters of the Fire District. The revenues from the EMS levy may only be used for the provision of emergency medical care or emergency medical services, including related personnel costs, training for such personnel, and related equipment, supplies, vehicles and structures need for the provision of EMS services.

Clallam 2 Fire-Rescue needs an EMS levy to sustain our Advanced Life Support (ALS)/Paramedic service levels. The Fire District started providing ALS level services in 2012 and the demands for those services has continued to grow. Funding for the ALS program comes from the existing fire levy but as the cost to provide ALS services has

increased, the need to have a dedicated funding source specifically for EMS service delivery has also grown. Clallam 2 Fire-Rescue has never had a levy directed to support emergency medical services. The Fire Commissioners and staff are aware that our citizens are concerned about their property taxes. In 2012, the decision was made to start providing an ALS level of service using funding from the existing regular fire levy. While this saved taxpayer money initially by diverting funds from the regular fire levy to support the ALS services, this is not a long-term sustainable solution.

The vast majority of Fire Districts and Cities in Washington State that provide ALS level of services have existing EMS levies to support those programs. Clallam 2 Fire-Rescue is one of three public agencies in Clallam County licensed as an Advanced Life Support Trauma Verified agency. The other two, Clallam County Fire District #3 and the Port Angeles Fire Department, have a previously approved EMS levy or Medic 1 Utility Tax in place to help fund those programs.

Proposition 2 will be for the creation of a 10-Year EMS levy at a rate of \$0.50 per thousand of assessed property value. It would expire at the end of 2034 unless renewed by the voters at that time. If successful, the highest priority for an EMS Levy is to ensure the long-term stability of the Fire District's ALS/Paramedic program. This will include;

- Funding EMS supplies and equipment

- Establishing a capital purchase fund for replacement of larger EMS required items such as cardiac monitors, gurneys, and ambulances
- Sustaining funding for our existing career staff which includes four firefighter/paramedics and five firefighter/EMTs
- Hire three additional firefighter/paramedics/EMTs to increase staffing at Fire Station 22 in Dry Creek. Currently this station is only staffed Mon-Thurs 7 AM – 6 PM. By hiring 3 more positions, we will be able to staff this station seven days a week during peak demand times (Fire Station 22 currently does not have living quarters for 24-hour staffing).
- Establish a program to eliminate ambulance transport balance billing for residents of the Fire District. This will allow the fire district to bill insurance companies and “write off” the balance of the bill for our residents.

While the Fire District recognizes it is never a good time to ask for an increase in the Levy and the establishment of an EMS Levy these levies are needed now in order to meet the increasing emergency call volume and fund our ALS program,. This will not only allow the Fire District to fill the vacant Deputy Chief Position and sustain our volunteer training coordinator, they will allow us to hire additional full-time firefighter/paramedics/EMTs to increase staffing on the west side of the Fire District.

In the last several years the Fire District has seen a dramatic increase in the number of emergency calls each year. Since 2011 we have seen a 103% increase in the number of emergency calls from 979 in 2011 to 1,994 in 2023. This has required the Fire

District to transition from an all-volunteer response model to using a combination of full-time career and volunteer members to handle the increasing demand. Each year the Fire District continues to see increasing demands and approximately 27% of the time, we have overlapping incidents. Currently the Fire District has nine full-time firefighters which allows us to staff the Gales Addition Fire Station 24/7 with two firefighters and our Dry Creek Fire Station Monday-Thursday from 7 AM to 6 PM. As we see more calls each year and more overlapping calls, increasing staffing will be critical to lowering response times and improving patient outcomes.

More information is available on our website, [www.clallamfire2.org](http://www.clallamfire2.org). If you have questions please feel free to contact Chief Jake Patterson at 360-457-2550 or by email [jpatterson@clallamfire2.org](mailto:jpatterson@clallamfire2.org). This spring and summer there will be several community outreach sessions to provide information and answer any questions you may have.

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Clallam 2 Fire-Rescue provides fire suppression and Advanced Life Support emergency medical service to 9,500 people over 85 square miles outside the city of Port Angeles serving the communities of Deer Park, Gales Addition, Mt. Pleasant Community, Black Diamond, Dry Creek, and Lake Sutherland as well as the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. Forty-five volunteers and nine full-time Firefighter/Paramedics/EMTs respond to an average of 1,900 emergency calls per year.

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