

Proposed Wenatchee Valley Fire Department Regional Fire Authority

Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Information

The primary purpose of forming an RFA is to improve emergency service delivery and gaining efficiencies in facilities and administration. Douglas County Fire District 2 will benefit from an additional staffed engine company and gain a fleet maintenance and training facility. Chelan County Fire District 1 will benefit from an additional staffed engine company too. The additional staffed engine company ensures greater unit availability when you need to call 911, which was over 5,200 times in 2021.

The proposed RFA Plan has two key components: Operations and Finance.

Operations

Combining the fire districts results in less administration, more firefighters, shared fleet maintenance and training facilities. Remaining separate requires hiring redundant administrators and constructing redundant fleet maintenance and training facilities. All of which takes money away from direct service delivery to the public.

- Administrative Chiefs will be reduced from 7 to 4 in the RFA.
- 6 additional firefighters will be hired/retained to staff a new fire station in Rock Island.
- The National Fire Protection Association Standard for deployment on a single house fire is 15. The RFA will have a minimum daily staffing level of 16 firefighters. The current minimum staffing of the two districts is 14.
- The National Fire Protection Association Standard for staffing a fire engine is 4 firefighters. Engaging in interior building firefighting requires 4 firefighters on scene per the Washington Administrative Code.
- However, the State of Washington allows an exemption to the 4-firefighter rule if 3 firefighters are on scene and there is a verified occupant trapped. Both Districts, or the RFA, are dependent on our college student volunteers and traditional volunteers to have a 3-person fire engine. We aspire to always have a 3-person engine for both rescues and CPR. Effective CPR requires 3 people: one for chest compressions, one for breathing and one to operate the defibrillator.
- The RFA will have a minimum of 2 firefighters on a fire engine. However, an additional fire station, in Rock Island, will be staffed. This allows for reduced response times for fire engines to converge with each other and meet the 4-firefighter minimum.
- The fire engine availability is increased throughout the service area by staffing Rock Island. Currently, an incident in Rock Island requires, at a minimum, the Eastmont Street station and often the Squilchuck Road station to respond. Hence, the area with the highest call volume is stripped of resources. To counter this statistical exposure, we move other resources out of their respective territory. For example, the Sunnyslope station will relocate to downtown Wenatchee.
- The closest fire engine will respond regardless of what side of the bridge(s) the incident is on.
- Our response goal is to have a fire engine at your residence within 4-6 minutes of dispatch.
- Our volunteer ranks have depleted by 70% over the past 10 years. Competing for scarce volunteers and college students is counterproductive to sharing the resource and staffing based on demand versus what side of the bridge you reside.
- We will share both a fleet maintenance and training facility versus building redundant facilities 5-miles apart.