

Frequently Asked Questions

Will you be able to respond to an emergency faster?

Yes. During the daytime hours, it definitely will. It will cut out the travel time from work or home to the station. This will drastically improve first-due response times.

Why 2 employees?

2 is the minimum for crew safety, integrity, and efficiency in delivering the best service to the public. The average employee-to-call ratio is roughly 1 employee for every 100 calls. We ran 622 calls in 2024, which would put us at 6 employees. We are lucky to have continual support from a large volunteer staff that participates at a high level, so we feel supplementing them with 2 will be sufficient until the call volume reaches a level that is not sustainable. See the department comparison page on the website and look at other department's employee-to-call ratios.

Why do you have so many fire trucks?

We have the minimum needed for our call types, station coverage, and ISO (International Organization for Standardization) rating. There is an asset tab on the website where you can look and see what each apparatus is used for its condition, and its replacement date and cost.

What will you do if the levy doesn't pass?

We will do our best with what we have. The missed EMS call volume will continue until we have staffing to cover the calls. The workload will continue to increase. We will try to pass a levy again. We are committed to serving our community.

How much increased funding goes to employees and how much to the increase in the cost of goods?

80% goes to employees and 20% to the increase in cost of goods.

I didn't realize you were all volunteers, why not hire more people?

We have a paid Chief, part-time Administrative Assistant, and part-time Mechanic. All of our Firefighter/EMTs are volunteers. We feel hiring 2 now will supplement the volunteer staff sufficiently trying to keep the impact on the taxpayers to a minimum.

Why don't you transport with an ambulance service?

We are in a unique situation where we are close enough to the ambulance service, we don't need to transport but make a difference in initial patient care responding as a quick response unit. There are situations where we do transport if the local service cannot respond in a timely fashion.

Will you be able to do burns for people?

We generate a list of people needing burns every year. With emergency response commitments, it is impossible to do them all, however, if we can incorporate training opportunities or have available volunteers on a weekend we try and do what we can. Emergency services come first.

What kind of emergencies do you respond to?

Our call types are structure fires, chimney fires, wildland fires, motor vehicle accidents, swift water rescue, low angle rescue, medical emergencies, alarms, and general calls for service. Anyone having a bad day in our District generates a dispatch for service.

What is your ISO (International Organization for Standardization) rating?

We are an ISO Class 3. ISO is the rating schedule insurance companies use to calculate premiums for what they are charging you for insurance on your home and business. ISO is a complicated rating that looks at fire departments, people, training, water supply, equipment, apparatus, testing, response times, staffing, and documentation then rates your department on a scale of 1 to 10. 1 being the best and 10 being the worst. An ISO Class 3 Rating is in the top 10% of fire departments nationwide. There are very few volunteer or combination departments with ISO ratings of 3 in Montana. Corvallis Fire has worked hard to achieve and maintain a Class 3 Rating. For example, Missoula City, an all-career department with hydrants, has a rating of 3. It is a continual process, and we get rated every 5 years.

How do I figure out how much the levy will increase my taxes?

You will need to know the assessed tax value of your property, not your appraised value. The assessed value is much lower than appraised. From there the calculation is roughly .11 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value. For example, an assessed value of \$400k would be \$44.00 annually.

What will the Firefighters do when not answering calls?

Some of the job duties they will perform are Daily maintenance and service checks on apparatus and equipment. This is important to keep our inventory in a state of readiness and reduce repairs and maintenance costs. They will do the required testing for our Class 3 Insurance rating testing hydrants, fill sites, fire hoses, and ground ladders. Helping with professional testing of pumps, air bottles, masks, and the aerial ladder. They will perform minor facilities and apparatus repairs and maintenance. They will run our decontamination program removing the cancer-causing carcinogens from our safety gear, breathing apparatus, and the interior of our fire trucks. They will put on fire prevention classes for young students teaching them safety and awareness. To mention a few.

Why have I seen Corvallis Fire on fires in Hamilton?

Corvallis, Hamilton, Pinesdale, and Victor have interagency agreements to respond automatically to certain call types or respond as requested. The same is true when Hamilton responds to some of our calls. It is a trade for manpower and equipment to minimize loss of property and minimize on-scene time so volunteers can return to their families and jobs.