



## SNOHOMISH REGIONAL FIRE & RESCUE

### **Chief's Report**

**January 23, 2025**

#### **Mission**

Save Lives, Protect Property, Safeguard the Environment, and Take Care of People

#### **Vision**

We will be a proactive regional emergency services leader by partnering to provide safe communities for people to live, work and explore.

#### **Guiding Values**

Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Teamwork, Service

### **OPERATIONS**

#### **Promotions**

The District would like to congratulate Brandon Gardner and Ryan Lowe as they were promoted to the rank of Battalion Chief effective April 1, 2025. Thank you both for your continued leadership within Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue.

#### **Significant Alarms**

##### **Residential Fire**

In the early evening of January 18, a resident renting the upstairs living space in the 1900 block of Vernon Road in Lake Stevens arrived home to retrieve their mail key. Upon opening the door to the garage, they discovered smoke filling the area, though no flames were visible. The resident left the door open, called 911, and went upstairs to rescue their three cats and one dog. However, upon reaching the upstairs level, they saw flames outside the window and followed 911's advice to evacuate the home immediately without their pets.

Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue (SRFR) arrived shortly thereafter and initiated both an aggressive attack on the fire and a primary search of the home. During this search, firefighters successfully located and rescued all the pets, bringing them to safety without injuries.

The fire appears to have originated in the garage, and the Snohomish County Fire Marshal's Office is investigating the cause. The garage contained a sizable number of possessions, which made firefighting efforts somewhat challenging and provided additional fuel for the fire.

Thankfully, no residents or pets were injured in the incident. Unfortunately, one SRFR firefighter sustained a rolled ankle and was transported for medical treatment. We extend our gratitude to Snohomish County Fire Districts #4, #22, and Marysville Fire District for their assistance. The



SRFR North Battalion were among the initial crews that arrived and effectively knocked down the fire. Excellent work by everyone involved!

### **Residential Fire**

On January 19, units from the East Battalion, along with mutual aid from SCFD #4 and #5, responded to a fire at a converted two-story garage. Units arrived to find a metal-sided, two-story shop/garage that had been converted into living quarters with a large carport. Engine 32 made a quick initial attack on the second floor, where dark smoke was visible, while Engine 31 attacked the first floor. Searches were completed, which confirmed that no one was inside. Crews faced a challenging and lengthy overhaul while searching for hot spots. The building's "DIY" construction led to multiple complex paths for the fire, including small void spaces that made firefighting efforts more difficult. According to the Snohomish County Fire Marshal, the fire likely started on the first floor due to a poorly installed wood burning stove. Red Cross was notified to assist two adults, as the building was no longer safe to occupy.

### **Special Operations**

#### **Water Rescue**

On January 16, multiple units from the North Battalion responded to a report of a vehicle that had driven down the North Cove boat launch after making a wrong turn. The car was reported to be in waist-deep water, with one occupant still inside.

Battalion 81 arrived on scene to find the car floating about 100 feet into the lake. After walking to the end of the dock, an elderly female was observed in the driver's seat and a bystander was standing on the passenger side windowsill, holding the car steady to prevent it from tipping over. Battalion 81 instructed both to stay in their stable positions.

Medic 81, along with Swift Water Rescue Technician Lieutenant Scott Rybar and off-duty Rescue Swimmer Alex Fatkin, arrived at the scene shortly after. The rescue team immediately entered the water, providing the occupant with a life jacket and a paddleboard for safety. As the vehicle began drifting further, the team secured a throw rope to the driver's side of the car, slowly pulling it closer to the dock. Additional crews brought portable lighting, life jackets, and throw bags to the scene.

As the car started to submerge, leaning engine block-first, Firefighter Alex Fatkin swiftly pulled the occupant through the passenger side window and assisted her onto the paddleboard. She was transported to shore by water rescue technicians at which point she received medical evaluation and was warmed. Meanwhile, the bystander, who had been holding the car steady, jumped from the vehicle and swam to the dock. He was subsequently evaluated and treated.

Thankfully, neither the occupant nor the bystander required transport to the hospital and the passenger was safely driven home. The vehicle was secured at the end of the dock until towing could be arranged. Great teamwork by everyone!



### **Emergency Medical Services**

MSO Terry instructed a class he created on MSO Tactics for our members completing their Acting MSO checkoffs, to help prepare them for the job requirements. The class was well-attended, and we received positive feedback from participants.

Paramedic Matthew Ball attended an airway class in Texas this past week, learning from top airway management experts.

SRFR Paramedics achieved a 91% First Pass success rate for intubation in 2024. This is a significant achievement and reflects the hard work and dedication our members put into training.

### **Training**

Training is looking to fill two positions: one in-house member and one training officer for the Snohomish County Fire Training Academy. Letters of interest will be accepted until December 23.

Battalion Chief Christian DiMonda and Battalion Chief Joe Basta successfully led a well-attended SRFR Tactics class on January 9-10. We continually count on these two to perform this high caliber training that assists our members in getting ready for promoted positions.

Congratulations to Sam Langheld for completing his Acting Battalion Chief training requirements, qualifying him for the role.

The Battalion Chief promotional exam is scheduled for April 23, with several qualified candidates.

Training welcomed four new Lateral Firefighters to the SRFR family on January 6 who are currently completing an 8-week in-house Lateral Academy. Welcome Kaine Bayze, Warren Carson, Kaden Keogh, and Conner Mitchell!

### **Health & Safety**

The Health & Safety Team took delivery of its first PPE gear dryer at Station 73. A special thank you to A-Shift for getting it into position. Logistics is planning to install venting to the outside of the building before the dryer is put into service. Station 77 will be the next to receive a PPE gear dryer.

Additionally, the Health & Safety Team has implemented a new system to alert employees about freezing conditions. Each station now has an Ice Alert sign visible when approaching the station parking area. If the sign turns blue, it indicates freezing conditions, so be prepared for potentially slippery surfaces when walking to the station. A big thank you to Logistics for installing these signs!



## SUPPORT SERVICES

### Community Relations

#### **Chamber of Commerce Membership Meetings**

The Sky Valley Chamber Membership Luncheon on January 8 was attended by Assistant Chief Messer, Senior Deputy Fire Marshal Bowen, and Acting Deputy Fire Marshal Dahl. The topic for January was networking.

The Lake Stevens Chamber Membership Luncheon on January 8 was attended by Commissioner Elmore, Deputy Fire Marshal LeDuc, and Program Specialist Larson. The topic for January was a presentation called “Crafting Your Company Story” with StoryBrand CEO Donald Miller.

The Monroe Chamber Membership Luncheon on January 14 was attended by Commissioner Elmore, Commissioner Schaub, Commissioner Steinruck, Assistant Chief Lundquist, Assistant Chief Messer, and Senior Deputy Fire Marshal Bowen. The guest speakers for January were Katie Darrow and Patrick Doherty, who discussed advertising opportunities with the Monroe Magazine.

### Capital Facilities Update

#### **Station 31 Shop Remodel**

This week, the electrician is replacing the panel that powers the shop. Gen-Cap is also getting several of the final inspections on electrical, plumbing, and fire protection. Staff from RFM, OAC and SRFR will be conducting our punch walk on January 30. The project is on track for a January 31 completion.

#### **Stations 32 and 81**

This week SRFR and OAC met with BN Builders/Miller Hull to discuss ongoing planning and cost estimates. A Phase 1B Amendment was presented to SRFR and will be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for review. This amendment will ensure continued work on the design and validation phases for both stations.

#### **Station 72**

The Station 72 sewer and water hookup project is awaiting final review from the Alderwood Water District, pending one additional document from Harmsen Surveying.

#### **Fleet/Shop Review**

Members from the EMS Spec Committee will meet with Braun Northwest on January 30 to discuss the 2025 budgeted EMS apparatus. The 2024 budgeted Battalion 81 vehicle is expected to arrive soon, and shop upfitting will begin shortly after.



## SNOHOMISH REGIONAL FIRE & RESCUE

### Office of the Fire Marshal

The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) is conducting 2025 annual fire and life safety inspections in Lake Stevens, Monroe, and Sultan. Nearly 94% of inspections were completed in 2024. Common findings included overdue fire extinguisher servicing and improper emergency lighting.

The top 10 inspection findings were:

<b>#1 Portable fire extinguisher annual servicing overdue / extinguisher not present</b>
<b>#2 Emergency lighting and exit sign batteries testing required</b>
<b>#3 Building fire protection systems overdue for servicing</b>
<b>#4 Building access keys are not updated in the Knox Box</b>
<b>#5 Portable fire extinguishers not installed on approved brackets</b>
<b>#6 Building address not installed per AHJ requirements</b>
<b>#7 Building electrical panel not kept clear for 36"</b>
<b>#8 Electrical junction boxes not covered</b>
<b>#9 Holes in rated fire walls not repaired</b>
<b>#10 Compressed gas containers not secured properly</b>

The OFM also completed 1,186 plan reviews in 2024, a 16% increase from the previous year. The increase in new construction has led to a higher volume of plan reviews, fire construction permit inspections, annual fire and life safety inspections, and pre-fire planning. This "snowball effect" has significantly increased the workload across the OFM. In January 2025, the OFM hired one FTE to manage the increased workload.

Thank you to all SRFR team members for your hard work and dedication each day!

Take care and stay safe,

The Office of the Fire Chief