

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## NEW HIRES:



Please join us in welcoming our newest recruit firefighters: (From left to right): Michael Stratton, Marcus Dolan, Ryan Murstig, Costas Zweekhorst. These positions were filled to replace vacancies due to retirements and attrition.



Join us in welcoming our new Fire Shop Apprentice Mechanic, Ben Towers, to the East County Fire Support Services Team. He will support the Division with emergency apparatus maintenance and repair.

## RETIREMENTS:



Congratulations to **Driver Operator Ed Mahrt** on his retirement after 22 years in the Fire Service.



Congratulations to **Lieutenant/Paramedic Jeff Larsen** on his retirement after 35 years in Fire and EMS.



Congratulations to **Battalion Chief Derik Millich** on his retirement after 34 years in the Fire Service.

## PROMOTION:



Congratulations to Joe Basta on his promotion to Battalion Chief. Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue is proud of his leadership, dedication and constant drive to help make positive changes to better serve our communities.



For more prevention tips visit <https://www.safekids.org/falls>

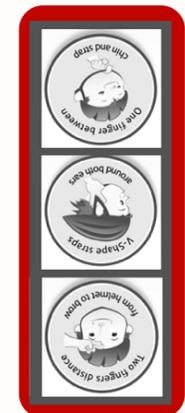
## PREVENTING WINDOW FALLS

As spring approaches and the weather becomes nicer, we tend to start opening our windows at home to allow the fresh air in. This is also the time of year that medical professionals see a spike in children falling out of windows. Falls are more common than we think. Every year almost 5,000 children are injured after window falls, most of the children are between 2 - 5 years old.

Children are curious by nature, top heavy by design, and can fall through a window opened more than 4 inches. Any fall through a window is dangerous, even if the child is on the first floor of the home. The National Safety Council has designated the first week in April as Window Safety Week. Here are few things to think about for any window posing a fall risk:

Here are three things you can do to reduce posing window fall risks:

- 1 INSTALL WINDOW GUARDS AND STOPS**  
 Never open windows more than 4 inches to prevent young children from falling out. Remember, screens are meant to keep bugs out, not children in. Properly installed window guards prevent unintentional window falls. Install window guards that include an emergency release device in case of a fire. Window stops are also a great idea. They allow fresh air and a cross breeze and still ensure windows cannot open wide enough for kids to fall out.
- 2 CLOSE WINDOWS AFTER USE**  
 If you have windows that can open from both top and bottom, make a habit of opening just the top to prevent accidental falls. Keep in mind that as kids grow, they may have enough strength, dexterity and curiosity to open the bottom so try to keep windows locked and closed when they are not being used.
- 3 KEEP KIDS FROM CLIMBING NEAR WINDOWS**  
 Move chairs, tables, cribs and other furniture away from windows to help prevent window falls. Also, teach children not to play near windows. Never move a child who appears to be seriously injured after a fall – call 911 and let trained medical personnel move the child with proper precautions.



BE SURE YOUR HELMET FITS!



- Always wear a helmet.
- Wear brightly colored clothes to be seen better.
- Make sure to ride on the sidewalk, and stay away from cars.
- Always stop at STOP signs and traffic lights.
- If you need to cross a street, walk your bike across; don't ride.



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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Dear Neighbor,

Last year was a year of unprecedented circumstances. Through all of the adversity that we faced and our communities faced, your Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue was prepared and ready to serve. More than ever before we lived out our mission of saving lives, protecting property, safeguarding the environment, and taking care of people as your emergency personnel responded to more than 16,000 emergency calls.

Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue remains committed to serving our communities in fire and EMS responses, while being on the front line of the pandemic. We continue to monitor the impact COVID-19 has had on our agency and communities we serve. Over the last year we have worked with our regional partners to provide protective measures and education. Our personnel have also been working collaboratively with all 23 fire agencies in the county and the Department of Emergency Agency as part of the Snohomish County Vaccine Taskforce to help administer the COVID-19 vaccine.

Through 2020, Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue was dedicated to providing the best service possible in a financially responsible manner. The fire district operates under a balanced budget and has earned more than 35 years of clean audits by the state. However, in the midst of COVID and an unsure economy we are looking at alternatives for funding. Our goal will always be to maintain our level of service. As an independent junior taxing district we do not receive tax funding from state or county government. Our daily operations are primarily funded through two local voter-approved levies paid through property taxes. By law, levy funding is limited to a one percent annual increase. This presents a funding challenge when general inflation increases more than two percent annually. We are evaluating our funding options in order to ensure long term stability of the level of service we provide to our communities.

It is only through your support that we have been able to build an advanced emergency response system in Snohomish County with highly trained

personnel and progressive rescue programs to serve you. All of us at Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue are grateful to have the opportunity to serve. We are one unified team always ready to answer your call for help.

I hope you have a safe and enjoyable spring.

Respectfully, Kevin K. O'Brien  
Your Fire Chief



# FIRE MARSHAL SERVICES: ANNUAL FIRE SAFETY INSPECTIONS



Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue provides much more than emergency response to fires, medical events, hazardous material spills and technical rescues. We work hard to prevent

these incidents from occurring. The Division of Fire & Life Safety is home to the Office of the Fire Marshal where our specially trained staff provide proactive fire safety inspections and fire code enforcement for the cities of Lake Stevens, Mill Creek and Monroe.

Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue employs three fire marshals, all certified by the International Code Council in fire code inspection, enforcement and plan review. In addition, the fire marshals hold credentials as certified firefighters, paramedics, hazardous materials technicians and fire investigators. Together, these dedicated employees have over 30 years of experience as fire marshals.

The Washington Survey and Rating Bureau assesses the capability of fire service providers within the State of Washington. One of the four categories of fire service rating focus on fire safety, specifically the frequency of fire safety inspections, certifications held by fire marshals, and years of experience working as a fire marshal.

Due to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and safety protocols that were put in place, annual fire safety inspections were placed on hold in 2020. As the county continues to follow the Governor's reopening plan, Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue has restarted annual fire safety inspections within our protected cities.

Per Washington State law, Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue enforces the 2018 International Fire Code with Washington amendments.

### The top 10 fire code violations found in our local businesses by our fire marshals are:

- Emergency lights not working, needing new bulbs or batteries
- Fire extinguishers needing annual service
- Misuse of extension cords
- New keys are needed for the fire district key box
- Ceiling tiles or holes in walls need to be repaired
- Exit signs not working, needing new bulbs or batteries
- Fire sprinkler or fire alarm systems need annual service or repair
- Cooking hood suppression systems need biannual service or repair
- Open electrical wiring needs to be covered
- Electrical panels and shut-offs are blocked

Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue's goal is to inspect all businesses for fire safety at least annually to help maintain and improve the level of safety in our community for our citizens and emergency responders. We are able to accomplish this by employing expertly trained fire marshals, robust computer systems and software, and working as a collaborative partner with our cities and business owners. For more information on our fire marshal services, request an inspection, or to file a citizen fire code complaint please call (360) 794-7666 or email us at FireMarshal@SRFR.org.

# CREATING HEART HEALTHY HABITS



In February, Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue celebrated American Heart Month. According to the American Heart Association, this month is, "a time when the nation spotlights heart disease, the No.1 killer of Americans." Beyond bringing attention and recognition to this issue, it is important that this month causes us to examine our habits and adjust our lifestyle choices so that we can make lasting change in regards to our overall heart health. The American Heart Association shares the following tips addressing how to do this and **GO RED**:

- G** **GET YOUR NUMBERS**  
Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure and cholesterol.
- O** **OWN YOUR LIFESTYLE**  
Stop smoking, lose weight, exercise, and eat healthy. It's up to you. No one can do it for you.
- R** **REALIZE YOUR RISK**  
We think it won't happen to us, but heart disease is responsible for 1 in 4 deaths.
- E** **EDUCATE YOUR FAMILY**  
Make healthy food choices for you and your family. Teach your kids the importance of staying active.
- D** **DON'T BE SILENT**  
Tell everyone you know that heart disease is our number 1 killer.

Though some of these tips can be more difficult to adopt than others, one of the easiest modifications you can make to improve your heart health is to move more throughout each day and each week. You can weave more activity into your day with simple practices like walking around the block, increasing your daily step goal, or doing body weight exercises while watching your favorite show. Getting outside and moving our bodies not only helps the heart grow stronger but also can ease the burden put on our hearts by risk factors like stress and anxiety.

In addition to increasing physical activity, it is also important to learn how to identify cardiac emergencies and how to respond to them. In honor of American Heart Health Month, Snohomish Regional's Public Education Team worked to share information about what to do in a cardiac emergency through videos, social media posts, and online education. Check out our videos about the heart and how to help it at [www.SRFR.org/Education](http://www.SRFR.org/Education).

Though heart disease claims many American lives each year, it is important to remember that, "in most cases, heart disease is preventable when people adopt a healthy lifestyle, which includes not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood sugar and cholesterol, treating high blood pressure, getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week and getting regular checkup." We encourage you to take steps today to make your heart happier and healthier.



# CREATING RESILIENCY: MANAGING STRESS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

"Unprecedented times" is a phrase that most of us would like to erase from our minds. The phrase conjures up many emotions as we reflect on the year and think about what lies ahead. The last year we have lived through some of the most trying times of our lives and it has taken a toll.

Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue works to provide safety tips to residents to live healthier lives and build safer communities. An individual's mental health is a key component to living healthier lives.

Mike Taigman, author of "Supercharge your Stress Management in the age of COVID-19", is an expert in resilience as it relates to improving the mental health of first responders. In a recent interview he pointed out the importance of being aware of the fight or flight response, or fear, which has been activated at some low level since the beginning of COVID. Our bodies are not designed to have this low-level constant activation of the fight or flight mechanism. When it is always activated it wears on our bodies in ways that we don't always recognize.

Taigman discussed tangible ways to help build resilience and reduce the constant fight or flight stress. **Here are a few evidence-based tips:**



**Sleep** = Try to get 7 hours of sleep a day. Stay away from screen time a couple of hours before bed time. Keep the room cool and the bed warm.



**Nutrition** = Stay hydrated during the day and eat balanced meals. Avoid high sugar/high processed foods. Don't leave too much time between meals and healthy snacks.



**Movement** = Finding alternatives to the gym is a challenge. Use different apps that allow you to exercise from home, or go out and walk/jog.



**Stay Connected** = Relationships have broken down and loneliness is at an all-time high. Reach out and connect with one person a day through a text message, a phone call, or a video chat. Even with physical distancing you can connect.