



# Lopez Island Fire & EMS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2026



## Lopez Fire & EMS : By The Numbers

Lopez Island Fire & EMS responds to incidents island-wide, from medical calls to firefighting, including responding to fire alarms and structure fires. To best serve the island, we partner with the Lopez Island Clinic, the San Juan County Sheriff's Office, the Island Oil Spills Association and many other agencies across the island and county.

### 2025 INCIDENT RESPONSE SUMMARY:

22 Fires

24 Fire Alarms

472 Medical Calls including car accidents

1 Search and Rescue

7 Hazardous conditions

18 Burn Complaints

30 Public assistance or non-life-threatening calls

Current 2026 call volume is over 160

## Chief's Corner

2026 marks the beginning of my 6<sup>th</sup> year with Lopez Island Fire and EMS; looking back at what our Fire and EMS teams have accomplished in that time with **community** support, is humbling. We still have a long way to go, but with the strategic plan **timeline** adopted by the District Board of Commissioners, we have a clear path forward.

This summer, the District will update its strategic plan for the next 5 and 10 years by first meeting with all our EMS and Fire staff and then reaching out to the community for input. There is a lot to accomplish, and it's important to hear from everyone before deciding what should come next.

This newsletter will clarify where we stand on apparatus replacement and station projects and will introduce Dr. Corsa, our new Deputy Chief. You may recognize him as the current San Juan County Medical Program Director, but with his experience as a fire officer in a former career, it was a no brainer to bring him on part-time as our Deputy Chief of Special Programs. Chief Corsa has been focusing on improving the safety and health policies of the District, which are meant to look after the department members' well-being.

- Adam Bigby, Fire Chief

## What Does Lopez EMS Offer?

We often are asked about what medical services Lopez Island Fire & EMS (LIFE) offers island residents. LIFE responds to approximately 450 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls each year. Our highly trained EMT's and Paramedics respond in LIFE's two ambulances which are equipped with state-of-the-art technology and equipment.

Due to our island's remote location, our EMTs and Paramedics undergo extensive training to enable a wider range of services than most other agencies in the contiguous United States. Operating under evidence-based protocols that are updated every 2-3 years, our EMTs and Paramedics bring a hospital level of Intensive Care expertise to the island; LIFE is also equipped with an IV pump, allowing Paramedics to safely deliver nitroglycerin for cardiac events and norepinephrine for hypotension. We are one of the only agencies in the United States to administer antibiotics for severe Sepsis, dramatically decreasing the time to begin infection treatment. For extended transports by boat or aircraft, LIFE recently began using a ventilator to provide safe, consistent breathing support to patients throughout their transport.

We are fortunate to work with four outstanding air medical providers: Airlift Northwest, Island Air Ambulance, LifeFlight Network, as well as the US Navy in case of adverse weather. We routinely use four areas as safe landing zones, including the clinic, MacKaye Harbor Rd., Windsock Farms and the airport. The members of LIFE's rescue team ensure landing zone safety. Thorough reports between our team and the flight crew ensure uninterrupted quality care from the scene to the receiving hospitals. If weather conditions don't allow for any aircraft, our staff accompanies patients on the San Juan County Sheriff's boat, providing care until they arrive at the hospital.

Maintaining competency in advanced skills takes dedication. Our EMS providers attend training twice a month to practice their skills and learn new techniques. Additionally, all staff review significant cases with a physician to fine tune our responses. This combination of talent, equipment, and dedication ensures that LIFE's EMTs and Paramedics can provide the highest-quality medical care at any time, day or night.

- Dr. Josh Corsa,  
San Juan County Medical Program Director &  
Lopez Fire's Deputy Chief of Special Programs

## Facilities

Lopez Island Fire and EMS has begun working with the architectural firm Rice Fergus Miller for the next phase of the District's facility project. We are currently exploring the possibility of prefabricated fire stations to lower the high cost of construction that comes with living on an island - the factor that has kept these much needed station upgrade projects from moving forward.

- Lopez Island Fire and EMS lacks space for apparatus storage: the bays we have are not tall or deep enough to accommodate modern fire apparatus.
- The District has no living quarters for overnight staffing, increasing nighttime response times well above industry standards.
- The district buildings need to be either replaced or refurbished. The 3 district outlying stations are nothing more than garages and do not qualify as true fire stations. They lack bathroom and decontamination facilities for personnel to clean themselves and equipment.



# Strategic Plan Elements Supported by the Levy

## Apparatus

Apparatus replacement is the most urgent challenge facing Lopez Island Fire and EMS. There have been significant improvements in recent years with the addition of two new engines and a new ambulance, but many of our apparatus are overdue for replacement or not designed for emergency response. Below are photos and status of our current apparatus and stations where they are housed:

### Station 41 - Village

- Engine 41- 2025 Spartan Engine
- Tender 41 - 2006 H&W Water Tender
- Rescue 41 - 2022 Ram 5500
- Aid 41 - 2022 Horton Ambulance
- Brush 41- 2021 F-350 type 7 Wildland Engine



### Station 42 - MacKaye Harbor

- Tender 42 - 2002 Freightliner (a converted public works water truck. Not intended for emergency use, this is a priority replacement as soon as funding is available)
- Engine 42 - 1996 H&W Fire engine (5 years past its life expectancy)
- No bathroom or decontamination facilities

### Station 43 - Port Stanley

- Simple Green /Brush 43 - 2004 Boise Mobile type 3 pumper, currently used as a structure engine, will be converted back to its intended wildland engine purpose.
- Engine 43 - 2026 Ford F-600 Mallory Fire Type 2 Pumper (arriving mid-May)
- No bathroom or decontamination facilities



### Station 44 - Center

- Engine 44 - 1996 H&W Fire Engine (the sister truck to Engine 42 and also 5 years past its life expectancy)
- Aid 44 - 2015 Braun Ambulance (scheduled for replacement in 2030)
- No bathroom or decontamination facilities



## Levy

Lopez Island Fire and EMS will be requesting a **regular levy lid lift** on the November 2026 ballot. The regular levy is the primary funding source for fire protection on Lopez Island; it has not increased since 2014. The 2026 request is to raise the current levy rate from \$0.47 cents per thousand to \$0.84 cents per thousand. If passes, this increase will:

- improve health and safety of emergency personnel
- Improve response times
- Improve our ability to train and retain firefighters and EMT's.
- Continue replacement of outdated apparatus and equipment
- Improve volunteer and career staffing



SAN JUAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4  
Lopez Island Fire & EMS Department  
2228 Fisherman Bay Road  
Lopez Island, WA 98261

ECRWSS  
Postal Customer

Lopez Island Fire and EMS is excited to announce the graduation of **2026 Fire Academy**. Six recruits started and six **Firefighters** finished.



We are very proud to welcome *The Snack Attack Crew*: Evan Palmer, Cat Wood, Josh Munson, Josh Carrigan, Carl Cain, and Zac Ahneman



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