



# South Pend Oreille Fire & Rescue (SPOFR) Levy Lid Lift Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What is on your August 1st Ballot?

SPOFR is asking our voters to consider increasing our regular fire levy rate to the previously voted on \$1.00 to \$1.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This is called a **Levy Lid Lift**. The current fire levy rate has fallen to \$.75 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The last time voters were asked to restore this fire levy was in 2010, 13 years ago.

## 2. Why is this necessary?

The fire district has grown considerably since 2010. It now encompasses 240 square miles. Our calls for service last year were just under 1,000 responses. This is being handled by only **4** paid career firefighters and a dedicated roster of community volunteers. With the scheduled closure of POEMS (Pend Oreille EMS ambulance service) in December 2023, this would put a huge burden onto those who volunteer, as well as having an extremely limited ALS (Paramedic level response) in the event of any medical emergency you or your family may encounter.

## 3. What does a “Yes” vote mean?

SPOFR will be able to ensure sustainable funding for:

- Hiring of full time Firefighter/Paramedics and part time Firefighter/EMTs to support the current volunteer Firefighters/EMTs.
- Maintain and enhance with Paramedics our current EMS response levels. EMS responses account for 70% of our total calls for service.
- Continued replacement of aging equipment, and aging fire apparatus vehicles. 50% of our current fire apparatus has exceeded its life expectancy.
- Maintain and work to improve our current Washington State Rating Bureau (WSRB) Insurance Rating.

## 4. What will this cost?

- If approved by voters, the **Levy Lid Lift** would increase the regular fire levy to \$1.25 per \$1000 of assessed property value and cost \$0.50 cents per \$1,000 (or approximately \$8.34 per month more for the owner of a \$200,000 home).
- RCW 84.55 limits the Fire District to a 1% revenue increase per year. Due to the 1% limit, most taxpayers are paying less to the regular fire levy each year as property values increase. The amount collected by the Fire District is not keeping up with the cost of inflation.

## 5. Why is SPOFR asking for a Levy Lid Lift?

- SPOFR has seen significant increases in emergency responses with more than a **355% increase** over the last 13 years (2010-2022). The unbalance of levy funding, increase in 911 call volume, and increase in operating expenses are why we are asking our voters to consider this **Levy Lid Lift**.
- Levies are the primary funding source for fire and emergency services. Levies pay for staffing, operating expenses, structure and wildland fire suppression, EMS support, fire prevention, and other essential services to our constituents living in our Fire District.

## 6.. What Does a “No” Vote Mean?

- If the **Levy Lid Lift** does not pass on the August 1, 2023, election ballot, SPOFR will continue normal **fire operations**. However, with the knowledge that POEMS (Pend Oreille EMS Ambulance service) has a planned closure for December 2023, without funding SPOFR will be forced to reduce its EMS support responses, and possibly eliminate EMS transports. **Currently EMS is being funded by fire suppression funds only. This is not sustainable at current call levels using volunteer staffing.**

## 7. What is SPOFR doing to make tax dollars stretch further?

- SPOFR has had and maintains a strong management and financial budget, passing all State of Washington financial audits. The district is always seeking grant opportunities to supplement daily operations.

## 8. Does SPOFR receive money from the State or County?

- **No.** SPOFR as a junior taxing district is separate from Pend Oreille County or the State of Washington governance and receives **no funding** from them or any sales tax. Levies are the funding sources for fire and emergency services provided within the Fire District.

For more information go to [www.spofr.org](http://www.spofr.org)  
Future Community Meetings are being planned