

I Need Help, But Where Am I?

Usually I start off talking about smoke detectors, home safety inspections, and other fire prevention items, but this month I would like to talk about what happens if you need to call 911. As history has shown, our requests for emergency service significantly increase during the summer time. Population increases within the Fire District, outdoor activities and risk filled human behavior mark hot temperature months. With the increased potential for accident and injury we want to be prepared to get to you as quick as possible when you need us most. Here are some simple steps that can reduce our response time

Make sure you know where you are:

In some cases, especially in the outdoors, we receive calls for help from individuals that have no idea where they are at. Newer phones have GPS capability; however this should not be relied on. If you are going outdoors make sure that you are always able to give an accurate location of where you are. In the case of a hiking trip, make sure that you know the exact location of where you started and how far you have traveled. Also note any turns or deviations that you may have made. As in any case when you are hiking, the purchase of a GPS device is strongly recommended. When you are at home, neighbor's house, or somewhere else in the community be cognoscente of your surroundings. If at all possible use a land based phone line to call 911. This will provide the 911 operator with the correct street address. If you use a cell phone make sure that you can give an address, or directions. This is imperative for emergency response.

Make sure that the address is visible:

Now that the Fire District has been dispatched to an emergency, we need to be able to find the location. All firefighters go through extensive training on street name, locations, and shortest response routes. Most of these are memorized and tested on for our new members. All response units maintain up to date map books. All staffed fire stations have large maps that fire crews can look at prior to their response. One of the largest problems identified is how addresses are marked on a residence. We recommend that Large numbers at least 3" high be used and located on a highly visible location. For years Mason County Fire District 2 has provided no cost address signs to anyone within our fire response area. Reflective numbers are placed on a red acrylic sign and placed in a highly visible location assisting crews on locating your home. In the month of April our goal is to distribute as many signs as possible to help us find you. For citizens that do not reside in our fire response area we ask for a small donation to help maintain this highly effective program.

Teach your children their home address:

You would be amazed how many children know their phone number, however can not give their address. Spend a couple minutes this month and teach your child, grandchild, or even great grandchild. This has to be one of the most important items that you can teach them. Test them frequently. Knowledge of how to contact emergency services is also important. Each year Mason County Fire District 2 provides training in conjunction with our dispatch center, for all elementary students at Belfair and Sandhill Elementary during Safety Days in June. We hope that your family continues this training at home.

As always we at Fire District 2 hope you and your family have a safe and fun filled Spring. More information on no cost address signs or other services Mason County Fire District 2 offers can be obtained on the Mason County Fire District 2 web page at WWW.MCFD2.COM or by calling 360-275-6711.

Question of the month: What approximate percentage of homes have properly displayed address signs? The first email or phone call that I receive with the correct answer will receive a gift from Starbucks Coffee.

Jeromy Hicks is currently Mason County Fire District 2's community outreach coordinator. With ten plus years of firefighting service including being a paramedic, fire prevention is his passion. Jeromy currently provides assistance with inspections, investigations, and education throughout Mason County. He can be reached at 360-275-6711 ext. 2.