



Camas Fire Department Newsletter

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CFD Command Staff:

Nick Swinhart

Fire Chief

Cliff Free

Division Chief of EMS

Allen Wolk

Battalion Chief

Larry Larimer

Battalion Chief

Mark Ervin

Battalion Chief

Randy Miller

Deputy Fire Marshal

Contact Information:

E-mail:

nswinhart@ci.camamas.wa.us

Website:

www.ci.camamas.wa.us/fire/

Our Mission:
To provide the highest quality service to our community through the protection and preservation of life and property



The combined staff of the merged Camas and Washougal Fire Departments

Consolidation Update By Fire Chief Nick Swinhart

A little over two months has passed since the trial merger of the Camas and Washougal Fire Departments officially began on August 20th. Things continue to run smoothly thus far and cost savings continue to be seen on a day-to-day basis, although these savings are leveling out as the departments see less vacation use this time of year. One significant event in the merger will likely take place later in the month of November. This event will be the assignment of a new Training Captain, which was approved as part of CFD's command staff reorganization. Discussions between Camas and Washougal, as well as the firefighter's union, has led to the effort to include all Washougal captains in the pool of available candidates for this assignment. In the event that a Washougal captain is assigned to this position, a Camas captain would subsequently be assigned to work out of Washougal's Station 171. Further discussions will take place in the coming weeks and a decision is expected before the end of the month.



New Division Chief of EMS

On October 27, 2011, longtime Interim EMS Captain Cliff Free was promoted as CFD's first Division Chief of Emergency Medical Services following an interview process conducted by an outside panel. In this position, Chief Free will supervise EMS training for the Camas, Washougal, and ECFR fire departments. He will also have a new Training Captain to oversee who will assist him in accomplishing the department's training goals. Chief Free will be the second in command at CFD and will take on the fire chief's duties when said person is absent.

Cliff has had a long and varied career in EMS and the fire service, beginning with a community ambulance service in Bozeman, Montana in 1996. In 2000 he became a volunteer firefighter in Hood River, Oregon, spent some time working out of Denver General in Colorado, and then worked 3 years with AMR private ambulance service. Cliff was hired as a firefighter/paramedic for CFD in 2005. Cliff and his wife Amy make their home in Camas, along with their 3 year old twins, Griffin and Sabine. Congratulations to Cliff on his new position!



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Overtime

CFD saw massive drops in overtime usage in the months of September and October. We attribute this to the work of our staff to decrease overtime usage along with the cooperation of the fire-fighter's union. The current merger with Washougal is also a significant factor. September 2010 overtime usage was 743 hours, versus 527 hours for September 2011. October 2010 overtime usage was 511 hours, versus 274 hours for October 2011. This represents a 36% decrease in overtime in the last two months. Thank you to all of the hard work by our staff that made this possible!



More FAQs from the files:

[Where should smoke detectors be placed in my home?](#)

Residential smoke detectors are early warning devices to wake a sleeping person or persons. Smoke detectors should be placed in each bedroom (sleeping area) and in the hallway leading to the bedrooms.

[What is the best fire extinguisher to purchase for my home?](#)

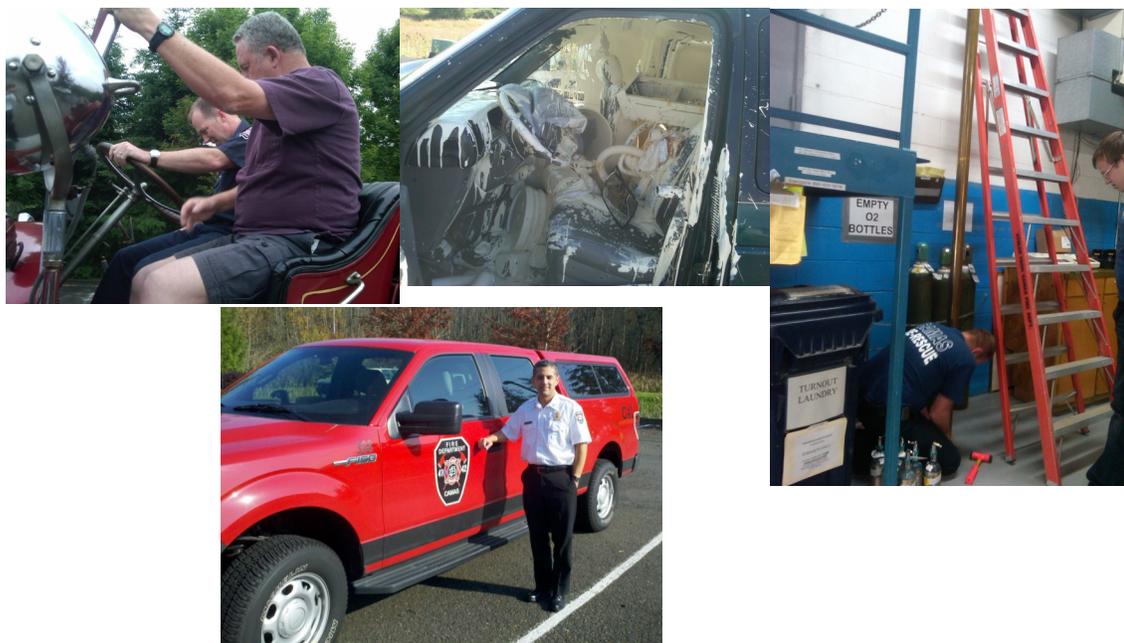
There are several different types of fire extinguishers. We suggest that you go to your local hardware store and see extinguishers for home use. As a general rule, extinguishers labeled Class ABC are best for home use.

Ambulance Rate Increases

As was presented recently at an ECAAB and Camas City Council meeting, CFD is proposing a 10% across the board increase in ambulance rates. It has been several years since some of our rates were increased, and it's important for our rate structure to keep up with the times. The proposed 10% rate increase is estimated to elevate ambulance billing revenue by some \$62,000 annually. Despite this increase, residents of Camas, Washougal, and ECFR, would still enjoy the lowest ambulance transport rates of any provider in Clark County. We feel this is an important benefit for our residents to have since they have so willingly approved EMS levies for the past 30 years that help supplement our emergency response system. This proposed rate increase is still pending approval by the Camas City Council at their regularly scheduled meeting on November 7.

Budget Update

The 2012 budget process is nearing completion in Camas and we are pleased to note that we were able to increase funding for training, as well as the fire marshal's office. These are line items that have been severely cut in previous years due to budget shortfalls. Camas has received even better news when it comes to the year end 2011 budget projections. Due to many internal changes made over the past year, the fire funding is expected to come in *under* budget. The EMS budget, which at one time was projected to end the year some \$300,000+ in the red, will likely be less than half of that and covered by reserves. Additionally, due to improved assessed property valuations and the hard work of our finance department, the 2012 EMS budget will likely be a break even proposition. This is fabulous news for our system and our entire team deserves a huge "thank you" for all their hard work in making this happen. Much of this good news also would not be possible without our partners in Washougal. Thank you!



Recent Photos (Clockwise): Captain Chuck Bettis instructs Division Chief Cliff Free on how to drive the antique fire truck before a parade, unsecured paint cans serve as a good safety reminder in a recent non-injury MVA, the slide pole at Station 41 makes a return after decades in storage, Fire Chief Nick Swinhart with the new chief's vehicle, which along with a matching BC vehicle, was approved in 2010 for the 2011 budget