



DEPARTMENT HISTORY

1918 - The water system in the City of Camas consisted of a privately owned water line, piping water down from Dead Lake (now known as Fallen Leaf Lake). Fire protection consisted of horse drawn hose carts kept in a small barn at the corner of Fourth and Cedar. There was no organized Fire Department, volunteers or otherwise.

1923 - A major fire destroyed much of downtown Camas between Birch and Cedar Streets, instigating organization of the Camas Volunteer Fire Department.

1924 - The Fire Department acquired a 50 gallon, A.G. Long & Co. Gram Bernstein soda-acid, "chemical truck" with 300' of hose to improve fire protection.

1929 - The Fire Department acquired an American LaFrance 750 gallon-per-minute pumper for \$12,000.

1940 - The new City Hall-Library-Police-Fire Station opened (now the current Library building).

1942 - The Fire Department had 4 full-time firemen.

1948 - The Department hired its first full-time Fire Chief and purchased its second pumper, a 1948 American LaFrance for \$16,000.

1950 - The Volunteer Fire Department started the C.A.R.O.L. (Christmas Activities Relief Organization, Ltd.) program providing Christmas food and gifts to benefit members of the community. This organization is still providing relief today.

1962 - A new phone system was installed that automatically dialed the 30 volunteer firemen to notify them of emergencies.

1989 - The Fire and Police Departments were combined into a Public Safety concept. Fire Operations employed 9 personnel, including the civilian paramedics.

1990 - The Fire Department employed six "fire" personnel, including the Chief.

1991 - The Public Safety concept was discontinued and the two departments (Fire and Police) were again separated. Firefighter staffing was now at 10 fire personnel.

1992 - The Firefighting staff was now at 11 personnel, and cross-training of the eight paramedics as firefighter/paramedics began.

1993 - The Fire and Rescue operations were consolidated with the completion of the firefighter/paramedic cross-training. A third Captain was appointed, providing an officer on each of the three shifts.

1999 - Three additional firefighters were hired beginning in March. The hiring completed the hiring of nine personnel over the past three years, the total needed for long-term staffing of the proposed west fire station.

2001 - February 9, the new west side fire station at 4321 NW Parker Street began operations. The new station has a large, community room facility, dorms for up to five personnel, a large,



drive through apparatus bay and a drill tower. A public open house and Grand Opening was held on March 24, 2001 to overwhelming public attendance.

AMBULANCE HISTORY

1935- The Camas Volunteer Fire Department began a basic first aid ambulance service with volunteers. The service extended east into Skamania County and west into what is now Cascade Park. The Department acquired the first medical "aid car" in the State of Washington, a 1931 Lincoln sedan, equipped with an E.&J. inhalator-resuscitator. The ambulance responded to 47 calls in the first year. No other service was available in the area.

1959 - The City Council voted to discontinue the aid car service, citing the existence of a private ambulance company and the age of the aid car.

1962 - After a committee review, a new aid car was purchased and the Fire Department aid car service was resumed.

1970 - The Fire Department acquired a 1970 "Superior Cadillac Rescuer Ambulance" containing "the latest and most modern life support equipment".

1972 - Ambulance service was upgraded to the basic life support level with higher trained volunteers. Call volume was at an annual rate of 428.

1975- The first modular type ambulance was purchased. There were 563 ambulance calls that year.

1978- Service was upgraded to advanced life support with higher trained volunteers. There were 660 ambulance calls.

1979 - A program to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) Paramedic ambulance service to the east Clark County area was studied. Voters supported the concept, approving a \$0.25/1,000 assessed valuation property tax to support the program. There were 688 ambulance calls, 50% occurred outside the city limits of Camas.

1980- The East County Paramedic Service was formed, covering the cities of Camas and Washougal, and Fire Districts 1 and 9. The service area covered about 100 sq. miles. Four paramedics were hired, with one paramedic on-duty 24 hours per day. Volunteers served as drivers. There were 831 ambulance calls.

1983- Following the EMS Levy renewal, the fifth paramedic was hired, still one paramedic was on-duty at a time. There were 850 ambulance calls.

1987- There were 1,160 ambulance calls, reliance on volunteer drivers was becoming problematic and other options were explored.

1988- The EMS Levy was renewed by voters with 84% in favor. The sixth paramedic was hired, two paramedics were available part of the time. There were 1,169 ambulance calls. Off-duty career firefighters, called in from home, began serving as drivers.



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1990- The seventh paramedic was hired. With the addition of on-duty firefighters serving as ambulance drivers, immediate response of the ambulance was assured. There were 1,308 ambulance calls.

1991- The eighth paramedic was hired and two paramedics on-duty 24 hours per day became the standard. There were 1,399 ambulance calls, 202 required more than one ambulance simultaneously.

1993- Implementation of Firefighter/Paramedic and cross training of paramedics was completed. There were 1,930 ambulance calls, 267 required more than one ambulance simultaneously.

1994- The EMS Levy was renewed. A ninth paramedic was hired to maintain service levels.

1997- Six additional cross-trained Firefighter/Paramedics were hired to staff a second, west fire station. With completion of their basic training, three ambulances were available, utilizing on-duty staffing.

1999- A new ambulance was purchased and an older one retained as a fourth, reserve ambulance, assuring 3 available ambulances when one is being serviced.

2000- Camas Ambulance responded to 2,257 medical calls. An historical, but difficult to serve, area west of 192nd Avenue was relinquished to a private ambulance provider on the recommendation of the county medical program director.

FIRE CHIEF HISTORY

1924 - 1931 Ed Reed

1931 - 1936 F. Province

1936 - 1948 Dick Huycke

1948 - 1961 Lawrence Beauchamp

1961 - 1972 Willard McCoy

1972 - 1981 Deloy Little

1981 - 1989 Maynard Erickson

1989 - 1992 William Hillgaertner (Public Safety Director)

1992 - 2004 Dave Artz

2005 - 2011 Leo F. Leon

2011 - present Nick Swinhart



History of Camas Fire Department Chiefs



Ed Reed
1924-1931



Frank Province
1931-1936



Dick Huycke
1936-1948



Lawrence Beauchamp
1948-1961



Willard McCoy
1961-1972



Deloy Little
1972-1981



Maynard Erickson
1981-1989



William Hillgaertner
1989-1992



Dave Artz
1992-2004



Leo Leon
2005-2011



Nick Swinhart
2011-Present

