



Now Accepting Applications for the following positions:

**Paramedic/Firefighter – Entry Level
Paramedic/Firefighter – Lateral**

Featuring a Competitive Salary and Excellent Benefits Package



Applications Due: March 5, 2021

Letter from the Chief

Dear Applicant,

On behalf of the North Mason Regional Fire Authority, I would like to personally and sincerely thank you for your consideration in applying with us for the position of Paramedic/Firefighter. You maintain a unique set of talent, skills and abilities, and your desire to share those with us is greatly appreciated. A decision to change employers and/or embark on a new career is a major life decision that will undoubtedly impact you and the ones that you love.

As our application process proceeds, we are excited to get to know you, both as a professional and as an individual. While we will spend some time during the process assessing medical skills and technical competency, we will spend much more of our time becoming acquainted and learning what we can do to help you succeed. You will find that our assessment process is organized in a way that will allow you to learn about us and the values that drive our organization. We want to help you make an employment decision that is right for you and your family.

The North Mason Regional Fire Authority values its members more than any other asset. Our members are responsible for carrying out our mission to “Safeguard North Mason Communities” and to protect the community that my family and I call home. As a smaller organization, we operate as a tight-knit family, focused on professional excellence and compassion. We encourage our members to be their best by promoting formal education, personal and professional goal-setting and perpetual thinking outside the box.

We have a lot of exciting things coming to the Authority in 2021. This hiring process is being used to bring on newly created staff positions, as we move toward the implementation of a fourth operating shift (A, B C and D shift) and a 47.6-hour workweek (including 12 debit days) for our line personnel. We will also be opening a new state-of-the-art 19,000 square foot headquarters fire station and take delivery of several pieces of new emergency apparatus later this year. We are operating under a new five-year Strategic Plan and are prepared to launch an unprecedented physical and behavioral health and wellness program for our emergency responders. Additionally, we are beginning discussions and building partnerships for the implementation of an innovative community medicine delivery model. Our future has never been brighter, and we are excited that you may consider being part of it.

Thank you again for taking the time to review our application materials and willingness to put yourself “out there”. I look forward to the opportunity to meet you and for you to meet us in the coming weeks. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Beau Bakken, Fire Chief
North Mason Regional Fire Authority





Job Description

The North Mason Regional Fire Authority is currently seeking applications to fill anticipated openings in the positions of **Entry Level and Lateral Paramedic/Firefighter**. Paramedic/Firefighters are responsible for providing skilled emergency medical care and transport of victims of sudden illness and injury.

Paramedic/Firefighters are also responsible for performing tasks required to combat, extinguish and prevent fires, as well as protect life and property through rescue, public education and other emergency service activities. Additional duties include support services under the supervision of a shift Captain, including but not limited to training, maintaining equipment and quarters and other Authority related activities. Paramedic/Firefighters are critical in helping the Authority meet its mission to ***Safeguard North Mason Communities.***

Important Dates

Opening Date: January 20, 2021

Closing Date: March 5, 2021

Assessment

Center: March 9, 2021

Chief's Interview: March 16, 2021 (week of)

Start Date: To be determined

Entry Level Requirements

- Hold a valid WA State driver's license at time of hire
- Hold a current WA State Paramedic Certification or National Registry Certification
- Current PALS and ACLS Certifications
- One (1) year work experience as a practicing paramedic or previous work experience as an EMT or PM in Mason County
- Meet Authority insurability requirements
- Meet minimal standards of physical fitness and endurance
- Pass medical and background examinations
- Ability to obtain IFSAC Firefighter 1 Certification within one (1) year of hire

Additional Lateral Requirements

- Meet the minimum requirements of an Entry Level paramedic/firefighter
- Served a minimum of one (1) year in the capacity of a full-time paid firefighter
- Certified IFSAC Firefighter 1 or equivalent
- Successful completion of an organized fire training academy



**North Mason
Fire**
P.O. Box 277 - NE 460 Old Belfair Hwy - Belfair, WA 98528

Salary & Benefits

- Four-shift schedule (A, B, C, D); 12 Debit Days (47.6-hour workweek)
- 2021 Annual Salary (depending on qualifications): \$77,232 - \$90,864
- Education Salary Incentive: 3% for AA Degree; 5% for BA Degree
- 4% Longevity Pay increase upon completion of 5 years of service
- No Social Security participation
- Deferred Compensation Program with Authority Contribution up to 3.5%
- 76.6 hours paid annually in lieu of holidays
- Annual \$2,500 college educational tuition and book allowance
- 100% employer paid Medical, Dental and Vision for family and spouse
- \$2,500 to \$5,500 annual Health Retirement Account (HRA) contribution
- Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (MERP) participation
- Authority-paid Life Insurance
- WA State LEOFF II Retirement Plan participation
- Annual vacation accrual
- 18 hours monthly sick accrual

To Apply:

Completion of an Authority Employment Application is required for all applicants. A resume will not be accepted in lieu of an application. The Authority plans to invite qualified applicants to the Assessment Center for both a written and practical exam. To obtain a complete application packet, visit the Authority's website at www.northmasonrfa.com.

Please submit your application with all required materials to NMRFA Headquarters Station 21 located at 460 NE Old Belfair Hwy, Belfair WA or by mail to the address below:

North Mason Regional Fire Authority

Attn: Captain Carl Ehresman

PO Box 277

Belfair, WA 98528-0277

Completed application packets are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 5, 2021. Please contact Captain Carl Ehresman at paramedicapp@northmasonrfa.com or 360-275-6711 with any questions regarding the application or testing process.



The North Mason Regional Fire Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, color, religion, national origin, marital status, disability status or any other basis prohibited by federal, state or local law.

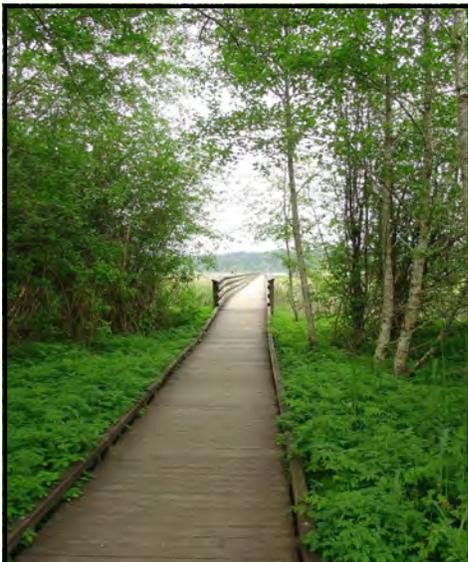
The provisions of this job announcement do not constitute an expressed or implied contract. Any provision contained herein may be modified and/or revoked without notice.

About Us

The North Mason Regional Fire Authority serves Belfair and surrounding communities in North Mason County. The Authority covers 132 square miles and serves a population of 22,000 residents. This population nearly doubles in the summertime recreation season.



The Authority is in the process of transitioning to a 47.6-hour workweek schedule (including 12 debit days) that utilizes four operating shifts. At time of transition, the Authority will employ four Captains, four Lieutenants and twelve firefighters. Additionally, eight of our line staff will maintain Paramedic Certifications. Two fire stations within the Authority are staffed fulltime and a third is staffed during daytime hours. The Authority will be moving into a state-of-the-art 19,000 square foot headquarters fire station in 2021. The Authority also has several special operations divisions, including an all-terrain vehicle rescue, hazardous materials response and wildland fire programs, and responded to over 2,400 incidents in 2020.



North Mason County

North Mason County is a picturesque community that surrounds the south end of the Hood Canal. It serves as a delightful bedroom community for nearby Bremerton and Tacoma. Surrounded by breathtaking mountains, the area is heavily forested and dotted with numerous lakes, providing limitless outdoor recreational opportunities. North Mason has an award winning school district and library, and is home to the state's largest off-road vehicle park, located in the Tahuya State Forest. Several infrastructure projects currently underway within the Authority are driving an unprecedented level of community growth.



LATERAL HIRE MATRIX

Starting Level	FF/EMT	Starting Level	FF/Paramedic
65%		85%	
70%	Current career FF/EMT, with IFSAC I and 2 years' experience	90%	Current career FF/paramedic, with IFSAC I and 2 years' experience
80%	Current career FF/EMT, with IFSAC I and 3 years' experience	95%	Current career FF/paramedic, with IFSAC I and 3 years' experience
90%	Current career FF/EMT, with IFSAC I and 4 years' experience	110%	Current career FF/paramedic, with IFSAC I and 4 years' experience
100%	Current career FF/EMT, with IFSAC I and 5 years' experience		

A lateral hire may be required to attend a recruit academy outside of the Authority based on an evaluation of skills as outlined in the employee's Minimum Staffing Task Book. Lateral hires who are required to attend a recruit academy will move down one pay scale until successful completion of a recruit academy.

Job Description-Firefighter/Paramedic

CATEGORY: Personnel
NUMBER: Pers-36
EFFECTIVE: June 2011

REFERENCE

North Mason Regional Fire Authority

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the Fire Authority's work expectation and description for the classification of Firefighter/Paramedic.

DEFINITION AND MAJOR FUNCTION: The Firefighter/Paramedic classification performs technical duties in the areas of fire suppression, emergency medical care, emergency rescue, hazardous materials incidents, fire investigation, fire inspection, fire personnel training and public education. Incumbents are responsible for responding to emergency and non-emergency activities. Firefighter/Paramedics are expected to exercise a high degree of judgment and initiative while making critical fire and life safety related decisions under high pressure and/or adverse conditions. This classification reports to and receives guidance and mentoring from the first line supervisor for the shift.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: The duties and responsibilities represented in this job description in no way imply that these are the only duties to be performed. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Essential Duties: The following duties are considered essential for this position:

- Respond to emergencies and calls for assistance.
- Participate in firefighting and/or rescue operations.
- Assess the nature and extent of illness or injury, to establish and prioritize medical procedures to be followed or need for additional assistance.
- Observe, record and report to physician and other EMS team members the patient's condition and response to drugs and other treatment modalities.
- Participate in salvage and overhaul operations.
- Respond to and take appropriate action at hazardous materials incidents.

- Direct and/or participate in the rendering of medical care at an emergency incident.
- Participate in training and drills for fire department personnel in assigned duties, including firefighting, medical care, hazardous materials response, fire prevention and related subjects.
- Complete work assignments on assigned company/shift/station; ensure that all decisions and actions are consistent with department policies, procedures and emerging priorities.
- Complete duties related to program management, to ensure project and program deadlines and milestones are met.
- Perform scheduled inspection of facilities, equipment and apparatus to ensure operational readiness.
- Participate in the inspection of buildings, residences and installations for fire hazards and fire safety systems as required by State laws and County ordinances and for pre-fire planning purposes.
- Perform basic fire investigation functions and submit timely and accurate reports as assigned.
- Conduct station tours, participate in demonstrations of equipment and techniques and make educational presentations to members of the public.
- Clean and maintain facilities, grounds, quarters, equipment and apparatus at Authority fire stations.
- Ensure appropriate written and oral communication takes place, to transfer information and current priorities from one shift and/or crew to another.
- Assist in developing recommendations and implementing new programs, policies and procedures that are focused on quality and productivity improvements.
- Attend technical skills training and continuing education courses as needed, to maintain technical and leadership skills and certifications. Demonstrate the ability to read, write and comprehend these and other related materials.
- Complete incident reports accurately and completely.
- Prepare reports related to assigned activities; maintain maps and records.

Additional Duties: In addition to the duties listed in the Essential Duties section, the employee may perform the following duties. An employee may not be assigned all duties listed below, nor do the examples cover all duties which may be assigned.

- Perform a wide variety of general staff work as assigned.
- Obtain and otherwise preserve evidence at an emergency scene.
- Participate in department meetings as assigned.
- Observe and report violations of laws and ordinances.
- Practice appropriate and professional communication with external and internal stakeholders.

- Attend crew/shift safety meetings as necessary.
- Ensure compliance with department standards concerning uniforms, emergency gear, tools and equipment, grooming and other related items.
- Receive and process reports from the public.
- Perform related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS: Any combination equivalent to experience and education that could likely provide the required knowledge and abilities would be qualifying. Typical standards to meet the knowledge and abilities requirement include:

Experience: For entry level, no prior fire experience is required. One (1) year paramedic work experience, unless the initial Paramedic Certification was obtained while having served six (6) months previous as a EMT-B within Kitsap or Mason Counties.

Education: High School Diploma or a Certificate of Educational Competence (G.E.D.). Major course work in fire science, fire administration, public or business administration or related field is preferred.

License or Certifications: This position requires the use of a personal or department vehicle while conducting department business. The individual must be physically capable of operating motor vehicles safely and must possess and maintain a valid Washington Driver's License, department approved EVAP training and a driving record free of significant moving violations. The Fire Chief may waive this requirement under exigent circumstances.

- Current Washington State EMT-P certification
- Current Mason County Paramedic certification
- Current ACLS, PALS, PHTLS certifications

SELECTION GUIDELINES: Formal application; written examination; physical ability test; assessment center; background verification and check; medical examination; final selection interviews.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES: While requirements may be representative of minimum levels of knowledge, skills and abilities, to perform this job successfully, the firefighter/paramedic will possess the abilities or aptitude to perform each duty proficiently.

Knowledge of:

- Policies, rules and regulations of the Fire Authority, as well as a working knowledge of the

- applicable national, state and local laws, ordinances and codes affecting the fire service.
- Principles, practices, methods and techniques of modern firefighting and protection of lives and property.
 - Principles, practices, methods and techniques of basic and advanced emergency medical care and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.
 - Principles, practices and functions of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) or other current Incident Management System.
 - Local geography, including the location of water mains and hydrants and the major fire hazards of all service areas.
 - Firefighting equipment and apparatus functions, minor repair techniques, inspection and the reporting of deficiencies.
 - Mechanical, chemical and related characteristics of a variety of flammable and explosive materials and objects.
 - Fire prevention principles, practices and procedures.
 - Basic fire investigation principles, practices and procedures.
 - Basic principles and practices of organization, administration, training and project management.
 - Basic financial management and budgeting concepts and practices necessary to effectively manage assigned resources with appropriate supervision.
 - Working knowledge and proficiency in the operation of computer equipment and software programs used by the Fire Authority.

Ability to:

- Effectively utilize equipment and apparatus in emergency situations and during routine or daily work assignments.
- Operate apparatus and equipment used in modern emergency response activities.
- Communicate clearly, concisely and professionally both orally and in writing, with individuals and in group settings.
- Establish and maintain cooperative and effective working relationships with assigned personnel and other department employees under both regular business and adverse/emergency conditions.
- Effectively resolve work-related problems and conduct preliminary fact finding inspections and investigations, including gathering and preserving evidence.
- Project a personal commitment to the mission and vision of the department; model leadership skills and behaviors consistent with the Leadership Development training and the guiding principles of the department.
- Comprehend and make inferences from written material; understand and apply department policies and procedures; read and interpret maps; prepare and maintain accurate reports and records.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS AND WORKING CONDITIONS: The physical requirements and working conditions described herein are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Incumbents in this classification generally work 48-hour shift assignments, including weekends and holidays, and may be required to work overtime with little or no notice. Career Incumbents may be assigned to work alternative shifts in accordance with the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement. Due to the varied and unpredictable nature of the work, incumbents may also be required to work under the following conditions:

- While on shift, incumbents are subject to unpredictable interruptions of sleep periods during which they must function effectively, including directing the work of others in emergency situations and functioning within the Incident Management System.
- Physical strength and ability to perform intermittently very heavy labor for extended periods of time under extremely dangerous and uncomfortable conditions, often while wearing bulky protective gear such as self-contained breathing apparatus.
 - Very heavy labor is defined as, for example, exerting force sufficient to lift and carry an adult victim, or as necessary to lift whatever weight is required to handle the emergency or rescue, either individually or as part of a team.
 - Often the lifting must be done in spaces where use of correct lifting techniques is not possible.
- Incumbents are exposed to a variety of weather conditions and are required to tolerate very hot and very cold temperatures.
- When responding to emergencies, incumbents also are exposed to other elements, including smoke, heat, flames, hazardous chemicals and blood and other bodily fluids.
- In these situations, they must be able to observe or monitor people or objects to ensure compliance with safety standards; stand, sit or walk for extended periods of time, unable to rest at will; use explosive strength, as in sprinting or jumping; walk over rough, uneven or rocky surfaces; use arms above shoulder level; bend or stoop repeatedly or continually over time; use common hand tools, such as hammers, saws and screwdrivers.
- Specific hearing abilities required by this job include the ability to hear and understand radio transmissions in an environment containing large amounts of background noise, in a moving vehicle and in a typical office setting. Incumbents are also required to have the ability to hear a variety of warning devices and alarms, gas leaks and/or calls for help.
- Some rescue duties require the operation of mechanical rescue equipment and the monitoring of proper safety techniques in the use of such equipment. The tools used by the incumbent require precise arm-hand positioning and movements, such as when

operating a chain saw or using emergency medical rescue equipment. The operation of equipment often requires the coordinated movement of more than one limb simultaneously.

- Emergency situations may require incumbents to work in small, cramped crawl spaces, areas where vision is limited and/or at heights, including on roof tops and/or ladders.
- The incumbent must have vision necessary to perform the essential job functions.
 - Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, peripheral vision, depth perception and the ability to adjust focus.
- In daily activities at a shift or station assignment, incumbents operate office equipment requiring repetitive arm/hand movements, as when they enter data into a terminal, personal computer or keyboard device.
- In order to keep abreast of developments in their field, incumbents must be able to learn in a classroom setting and through observation and oral instruction in an on-the-job training setting.
- Participating in training and operations activities involves observing and monitoring people, data and objects to ensure compliance with safety standards and department policies and procedures.
- Climbing and working off ladders greater than 10 feet above the ground to observe roof conditions/operations
- During fire suppression or contaminated air emergencies, must wear and use a self-contained breathing apparatus.
- Operate radios, warning light and siren control heads making fine, highly controlled muscular movements to adjust the position of a control mechanism.
- Conduct routine maintenance on equipment, apparatus and facilities using a variety of hand and power tools.
- Prepare written materials such as various documentation, reports, evaluations, shift schedules, rosters and e-mail using proper punctuation, spelling and grammar by entering data into a keyboard device requiring repetitive arm/hand movement.
- Communicate with the public and staff face-to-face, using a radio or telephone and electronic messaging.
- Provide training to staff and the public in a classroom setting.
- Operate emergency vehicles in adverse conditions in a controlled and safe manner while obeying State laws and Fire Authority policies.
- Attend professional training classes and team building sessions learning through oral and structured lecture instruction.

The examples of duties and working conditions are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work performed. The omission of specific statements of duties and/or working conditions does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.



North Mason
Fire

P.O. Box 277 - NE 460 Old Belfair Hwy - Belfair, WA 98528

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in employment with the North Mason Regional Fire Authority. The Authority is currently seeking applications for anticipated openings. The following items must be included in your application packet:

- North Mason Regional Fire Authority Employment Application
- Cover letter and resume
- Copy of your valid driver's license
- Copy of your current Washington State Paramedic Certification and/or current National Registry Certification
- Copy of your current ACLS and PALS Certification
- Copy of your current Health Care Provider CPR Certification

Completed application packets are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 5, 2021. Please contact Captain Carl Ehresman at paramedicapp@northmasonrfa.com or 360-275-6711 with any questions regarding the application and testing process.

TESTING INFORMATION: The Authority plans to invite qualified applicants to the Assessment Center, which will include both written and practical exams. The Assessment Center will be held on March 9, 2021, at NMRFA Headquarters Station 21 located at 460 NE Old Belfair Hwy, Belfair WA.



North Mason Regional Fire Authority

P.O. Box 277 / 460 NE Old Belfair Hwy Belfair, WA 98528
360-275-6711 phone / 360-275-6224 fax

Applicants may be contacted for interviews and assessments following the review of a completed application. If you are selected for the assessment process and need special accommodations due to impairment or disability, or have any questions regarding the application process, please contact Captain Carl Ehresman at 360-275-6711 or by email at paramedicapp@northmasonrfa.com.

Employment Application

Select the job position that you are applying for:

Full Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Last First M.I.

Residence Address: _____
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

_____ *City State ZIP Code How long at this address?*

Mailing address: _____
Street Address

_____ *City State ZIP Code*

Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date Available: _____

Do you have, or can you obtain a Washington state driver's license? YES NO

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? YES NO

If yes, explain: _____

EDUCATION

High School: _____ Highest grade level achieved?: _____

YES NO

From: _____ To: _____ Did you graduate? _____ Diploma: _____

College: _____ Course of Study: _____

YES NO

From: _____ To: _____ Did you graduate? _____ Degree: _____

Other: _____ Course of Study: _____

YES NO

From: _____ To: _____ Did you graduate? _____ Degree: _____

List below valid licenses or certificates of professional or vocational competence relevant to the employment position for which you are applying.

License/Certificate : License/Certificate Number: Expiration Date:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

REFERENCES

Please list three professional references.

Full Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Company: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Full Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Company: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Full Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Company: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Company: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Supervisor: _____

Job Title: _____

Responsibilities: _____

From: _____ To: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

YES NO

May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference?

Company: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Supervisor: _____

Job Title: _____

Responsibilities: _____

From: _____ To: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

YES NO

May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference?

Additional, relevant employment may be attached.

MILITARY SERVICE

Branch: _____

From: _____

To: _____

Rank at Discharge: _____

Type of Discharge: _____

If other than honorable, please explain: _____

How did you hear about this Employment opportunity? (Please provide specific name of media whenever possible.)

Word of Mouth: _____
Advertisement in: _____
Website: _____
Other: _____

NOTICES

The North Mason Regional Fire Authority (NMRFA) is an equal employment opportunity employer. All qualified candidates will receive consideration without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation or any other non-merit factor. NMRFA will reasonably accommodate candidates with disabilities as required by law.

NMRFA is a smoke and drug free work place. You will be required to complete a drug test prior to employment.

CANDIDATE AUTHORIZATION AND CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I certify that I am not engaged in any outside activity or business that could be considered a conflict of interest with the NMRFA or those of its clients, nor will I become engaged in such activity or business if hired.

I, the undersigned applicant for employment with the NMRFA, in consideration of the review of my employment application, do authorize the NMRFA to solicit information regarding my character, general reputation, previous employment and similar background information, and to contact any and all references I have given on my application. I hereby release all parties and persons connected with any such request for information from all claims, liabilities and damages for any reason arising out of furnishing such information. If employed, I release the NMRFA from any liability for future references it may provide regarding my employment with the NMRFA. Pursuant to RCW 43.43.834, background checks are available to the applicant upon request. It is my intention that any copy of this authorization be as effective as the original.

Applicant - Please Print Name

Applicant's Signature

Date

DRIVING RECORD

Name: _____
Please Print Last First MI

Driver license number (s) _____
License Number State

List all notices of infractions or traffic citations (other than parking tickets), which you have received in the past 5 years.

<u>State</u>	<u>Month/Year</u>	<u>Type of Infraction</u>

Infractions or citations will not necessarily remove you from consideration. The NMRFA will however, consider your driving record when making employment decisions.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

DISCLAIMER & SIGNATURE

I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any misstatement, failure to answer fully or omission of fact in this application may result in my not being considered in the selection process or may result in my dismissal of employment. I have read the job descriptions and I can perform the essential functions of the job for which I am applying, with or without reasonable accommodation. I understand that acceptance of an offer of employment does not create a contractual obligation upon the NMRFA to continue to retain me in the future. For determination of my potential employment eligibility, I hereby authorize release of educational, police, criminal and employment information pertinent to the position for which I am applying. I further authorize the NMRFA to rely upon and use, as it sees fit, any of the information received.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Completed Applications can be sent via email, fax, mail or hand delivered to Captain Carl Ehresman

PO Box 277, Belfair, WA 98528

Fax: 360-275-6224

Email: paramedicapp@northmasonrfa.com

Office hours: Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.



Community Dispatch

NEWS FROM NORTH MASON REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY | FALL 2020

Emergency Management Campus to Follow New, Innovative Design Approach

The North Mason Regional Fire Authority (NMRFA) has been working on the design of the new emergency management campus — using a new approach called progressive design build.

This approach became available to Washington State public agencies in 2015 and results in financial savings. To date, NMRFA is only the third fire service organization in the state to take advantage of progressive design build.

Traditionally, public projects first engage an architect to develop a design and scope for the project. With the design complete, the project goes out to bid, at which point the contractor is unable to make any changes, even if they would lower overall costs.

“Progressive design build allows you to partner with an architectural and design firm, and a builder concurrently. The design and contractor team develop and build the project together,” explains Fire Chief Beau Bakken. “This brings a team approach to the project, along with a tremendous amount of savings and a design perspective that you would lose in the regular bid process.”

NMRFA has hired Architects West and contractor firm TRICO for the project and has been meeting with them since July. The design process will be complete by the end of the year.

The project will be funded by a \$10 million bond approved by voters in November 2019. NMRFA obtained a credit rating of AA-minus, resulting in further cost-savings to taxpayers.

“A credit rating of AA-minus is a big deal for a smaller agency like ours,” Bakken says. “It puts us in a position to get the best possible interest rates on a bond sale. We were able to capture a historically low interest rate that will bring more than \$1 million in savings from interest.”

At 18,500 square feet, the new campus will be 2.5 times the size of current Station 21. Upon completion of the project, the existing building will be leased to Mason County. The building will house the North Mason Precinct of Mason County Sheriff’s Office and a satellite of the Mason County Division of Emergency Management.

The two buildings, located on adjacent properties, will bring North Mason emergency services to a single campus. This will help streamline and improve response to incidents that require interagency coordination.

Construction of the new building will begin in early 2021, with estimated completion at the end of the year.



Rendering of proposed Station 21 courtesy Architects West

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COVID-19 Brings New Patterns to EMS Response

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every individual and organization, and NMRFA is no exception. The past 10 months have brought extreme fluctuations in the use of local EMS services. At the beginning of the pandemic, NMRFA experienced a historically low call volume. This was followed by record-setting increases, which are expected to continue.

From February to May, NMRFA had a 27 percent decrease in calls.

“Folks were not using the 911 system. Maybe they were scared to go to hospitals or maybe they assumed we were busy responding to the pandemic and didn’t want to use us for minor illnesses,” says Chief Beau Bakken.

In an effort to encourage the community to use emergency services when needed, NMRFA launched several informational campaigns. In addition, the Fire Authority educated the public on new safety measures put in place to protect patients and crews.

In May, a new pattern emerged. Service calls increased beyond previously recorded levels; call volume is currently 6 percent higher than before the pandemic. It is typical for the beginning of summer to bring an influx of temporary residents to our community, but the increased volume has not abated since. This is likely due to work and school being remote, allowing people to stay in what would typically be their summer homes.

“What we feel happened was people who came for the summer stayed, and they brought family and friends, so the population skyrocketed,” Bakken says. “In my 25 years with the Fire Authority, I’ve never seen this. The pandemic has driven people to our community, and we’re all feeling the effects.”

The Fire Authority expects this increased demand for emergency services to persist as long as remote school and work continue and summer residents remain in the area. To help with the increased load, NMRFA has been tapping resources from neighboring agencies.

Chief Bakken notes that early on in the pandemic, as information was limited and fear was heightened, North Mason’s crews never wavered in their service to the community. Many NMRFA members faced the same challenges as the rest of our society, including spouses being out of work or childcare issues and the stress that comes along with that. Despite these unprecedented times, every member of NMRFA was steadfast in the commitment to serve and take the personal risks necessary to protect our community.

“Even though we knew we were seeing patients diagnosed with COVID-19, it didn’t stop our responders from caring for folks. There was never a hesitation about responding and showing up to work,” he says. “As a chief, it made me so proud to see that dedication and commitment in any circumstance that comes our way.”

Federal Grant to Pay for New Tender

FEMA recently awarded NMRFA a \$380,000 grant for a new water tender, which will replace a rig from 1975.

NMRFA hasn’t purchased a water tender since a voter-approved bond financed two of them in 1998. Of the five existing water tenders, the newest one is more than 20 years old.

“This is a huge win for us,” says Assistant Chief Scott Cooper. “We knew we had to upgrade our fleet, but getting there was tricky because we also have an engine on the replacement plan for this year.”

In addition to having modern features such as LED lighting, improved suspension, a backup camera and a state-of-the-art communication system, the new tender has extra water capacity. The other tenders carry 2,500 gallons of water and have a 500-gallon pump. By comparison, the new one will carry 3,000 gallons and will have a 1,000-gallon pump.

“The new tender will be capable of pumping to the primary attack engine with a sustained water source, which we haven’t been able to do in the past,” Cooper says.

This Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program award is the culmination of multiple attempts over the past five years. Originally, NMRFA applied for \$500,000 for a combined tender and engine.

“This time, we reduced the request to \$380,000 but for a larger tender, and we finally got the grant after rethinking it,” Cooper says.

NMRFA firefighter/EMT Anthony Rhead is largely credited for rethinking the request (read related story, page 6). The process is highly competitive and FEMA reviews applications in as many as 20 rounds. Last year, the program ran out of funds before NMRFA’s application made it through the phases.

“Since we didn’t get screened out, I knew we still had a chance and I told the chief I’d like to try it one more time,” Rhead says.

Rhead researched previous years’ water tender award recipients and contacted those fire agencies for insights. As a result, he recommended downgrading the request to \$380,000 for a water tender rather than a multipurpose apparatus with “various bells and whistles.” And this time, NMRFA’s application was approved in one of the early review rounds.

“Not only will this water tender be safer but will also have some firefighting equipment in it, so we’ll be able to use it to fight wildfires as well as protect homes,” he says.

NMRFA’s Apparatus Specifications Committee has been working on the design of the tender. The Fire Authority expects to receive several bids and place the tender into service in the second half of 2021.



NMRFA SERVICES

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- Car seat inspections
- Home safety inspections
- Loaner life vests
- Address signs
- Auto-dialer units
- Blood pressure checks
- Vials of Life
- Free smoke detectors
- First aid/CPR workshops
- Free bike helmets
- Burn regulations
- ... and more

Due to COVID-19, Santa had to cancel his North Mason run this year. We wish you Happy Holidays and we’ll see you next year!



Two New Firefighter/Paramedics Join the Team

Kyle Severance has been a paramedic for three years, working for an ambulance company and later for East Jefferson Fire Rescue. He loves using his skills to improve patient outcomes.

“Every patient, every case, every medical call is different — there’s no textbook scenario,” he says. “I like that challenge and seeing how the care we give can turn a patient around and positively impact their outcome.”

Severance started in emergency services as part of his high school senior project in 2001. He became a volunteer firefighter and attended the fire academy.



“Then the opportunity to become an EMT arose. Medicine wasn’t on my radar but it offered college credits

so I thought, why not,” Severance says. Severance spent four years volunteering as a firefighter/EMT at a fire department on the Washington coast. He found passion in medicine, which led him to take

a job for an ambulance company. After 10 years with the company, Severance decided to attend paramedic school.

“Medicine is my niche and I love it — but I missed the firefighting side so I put myself through another fire academy this year,” he says.

NMRFA hired Severance shortly before he finished the academy. He loves that his new job allows him to work in both the fire and medical aspects of emergency services.

“I also love rural medicine because you have to use the full gamut of your skills,” he says. “You have to be sharp and push your limits.”

Outside of work, Severance likes to snowmobile in the mountains in the winter and ski-boat in the summer with his family.

Zack Jensen started in emergency services in 2015 with Mason County Fire District 3 — first as a volunteer, then as career firefighter/EMT. As a North Mason High School graduate, he’s familiar with the local community. Additionally, he had worked with NMRFA crews on mutual aid calls during his time with District 3.

Jensen loves the challenge of the medical side of EMS, and decided to attend paramedic school last year.

During the final year of school, medic students must participate in a preceptorship. This is an internship program that combines classroom instruction with hands-on training, including a pairing with a professional paramedic. During his final quarter, Jensen was precepted at NMRFA — and by seren-

dipity, a full-time position for a paramedic opened up at that time.

“The Fire Authority was hiring as I was finishing up medical school,” he says. “It was almost like I was being interviewed while still in school.”

Jensen loves the fast pace of his profession, as well as the environment of an emergency services agency.

“I’m always seeing something new, and I enjoy helping someone who’s having a serious

problem,” Jensen says. “It comes down to how well you’re trained, and that makes a big difference.”

A resident of the West Sound region his entire life and North Mason since 2005, Jensen feels lucky to work in the community where he grew up. He enjoys learning the North Mason areas that are new to him, such as Tahuya.

Outside of work, Jensen enjoys kayaking in North Bay. He also loves hiking. One of his favorite hiking spots is the Gold Creek Trail in Dewatto.



Learn Basic CPR Education Online

Every year, 475,000 Americans die from cardiac arrest, according to the American Heart Association. Globally, cardiac arrest claims more lives than colorectal cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, influenza, pneumonia, auto accidents, HIV, firearms and house fires combined. That’s why providing CPR training to the community is so important.

Due to COVID-19, NMRFA was forced to cancel traditional CPR classes for the remainder of the year.

“We are extremely saddened to cancel these classes because we know that when CPR is administered rapidly, it saves lives,” says Emergency Prevention Specialist Lacey Newman. “According to the American Heart Association, nearly 45 percent of cardiac arrest victims survive when by-

stander CPR is administered immediately. Considering that the odds of a cardiac arrest victim surviving double when bystander CPR is performed, CPR training is of utmost importance.”

To account for the lack of in-person training, NMRFA is providing online CPR education. This will not be a formal class that leads to CPR certification. Rather, the goal will be to teach those who have never had the opportunity to learn hands-on CPR and to provide a refresher for those who have learned it in the past.

“We want as many people as possible to feel comfortable performing bystander CPR so that we can reduce the number of fatalities caused by cardiac arrest,” Newman says. “People who feel comfortable performing CPR are more likely to step up

and help until the paramedics and EMTs arrive. Every minute counts.”

To teach the basics of hands-on CPR for the general public, NMRFA has published a tutorial video. Newman hopes the video will provide both knowledge and encouragement for bystanders to step up and perform compression-only CPR if they witness someone in cardiac arrest.

“It’s important to us, at North Mason Regional Fire Authority, to do all that we can to prepare our community for emergencies in an effort to save lives,” she says. “Teaching CPR virtually is just one of the ways we are trying to serve and protect our community through this pandemic.”

The video was filmed in October and is available at northmasonrfa.com and on the NorthMasonRFA Facebook page.

NMRFA to Trailblaze Mental Health Program

Emergency responders work under extraordinary conditions every day and often go through horrendous experiences. Although many responders face mental health issues, there's no robust, concerted effort in the emergency services community to provide mental health support.

NMRFA wants to change that in Mason County. The Fire Authority led an effort to secure a \$140,000 federal grant to fund the development of a local mental health and wellness program for emergency responders. A countywide work group is being assembled to develop the framework for the program.

"There's no model out there for a robust program, only bits and pieces in some jurisdictions," says Chief Beau Bakken. "We want to see what's working or not working in other areas and create a comprehensive program under one umbrella."

The Need for Mental Health and Wellness for First Responders

Across the nation, EMS and fire professionals experience many of the same issues, ranging from stress and depression to post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Our responders see things an ordinary person should not experience, and we expect them to execute their job with precision and almost perfection in stressful situations," Bakken says. "And we ask them to do this almost every day. It takes a toll over time."

Physical wellness programs are a staple in this profession, but mental health resources

Findings from studies over recent years have shown that:

- **21 percent** of EMS personnel have **clinical depression**.
- First responders (firefighters and law enforcement officers) have **PTSD rates** as much as **five times higher** than average, and are **more likely to die from suicide** than in the line of duty.
- Both male and female firefighters have **higher divorce rates** than the average population.
- **85 percent** of first responders experience symptoms related to **mental health issues**.

are typically limited to small components such as employee assistance programs. The vision behind the compressive mental health program is to build resilience and give emergency responders — as well as their family members — the tools they need to cope with their experiences.

"First response tests individuals in a very unique way, and we want to bring in resources and professionals who specialize in emergency services," Bakken says.

The program will be available to both volunteer and career firefighters and EMS responders across Mason County. NMRFA's goal is to implement the program during the first part of 2021.

2021-'25 Strategic Plan Adopted

NMRFA will start the year 2021 with a new five-year strategic plan in place. The plan follows six months of planning and input sessions with stakeholders, including Fire Authority and community members.

"The 2021-'25 Strategic Plan looks at what we need to do over the five-year period to meet the needs and challenges of the Fire Authority and the community in a calculated fashion," says Fire Chief Beau Bakken.

The top categories included in the new plan reflect priorities such as the growth of wildland fires due to climate, environmental and population changes; the growing workforce; new preparedness tools such as mental health (see related story); and the continued focus on aging facilities and equipment.

NMRFA has been relying on short-term planning for the last 15 years, and this will be the fourth five-year plan to be adopted. Strategic planning enables the Fire Authority to follow guidance that is well coordinated, thought-out and documented. Many efforts that have been underway — including the emergency management campus — have been part of this process.

"We couldn't be more ecstatic with the accomplishments we've seen come out of the strategic planning process," Bakken says. "The planning allows us to maintain sight of where the organization is going, while we're still focused on day-to-day activities. We're going to do our work and respond to emergencies, but at the same time we want to make sure we can meet the changing and growing needs of our community."

Tahuya Fire Station Apparatus Bay Complete

The new apparatus bay at the Tahuya Fire Station recently opened its doors, following the completion of the construction project in July. The 3,800-square-foot facility includes a 400-square-foot mezzanine, as well as parking capable of accommodating a large fire truck, in case there is a demand for one in the future as our community grows.

Remodeling the old fire station 81 will be part of Phase 2. The remodeled building will provide offices, kitchen facilities and space for both station staff and volunteers.

The timeline for Phase 2 will be established after the emergency services campus project in Belfair is underway. Staggering the timelines will allow the Fire Authority to devote full attention to each of these two very important projects.

A virtual ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the apparatus bay recently took place. The celebration video is available on the NMRFA website and Facebook page.



NMRFA Expands Emergency Prevention Services



NMRFA added a new position this summer — Emergency Prevention Specialist — expanding on the public outreach and education activities that were already in place. Lacey Newman, a second-generation firefighter and a Belfair native, has been serving in this new role since June.

“The job is to work with youth, seniors, the business community and other groups and individuals to prevent emergencies,” says Chief Beau Bakken. “That’s where we find the most success — when people don’t have to call 911.”

Newman manages a variety of prevention programs, such as Vial of Life, life jacket loaner and first aid/CPR. She also coordinates services such as the distribu-

tion of smoke detectors and bike helmets, and installation of address signs and Freedom Alert systems.

Another aspect of her job includes creating educational content for social media and writing safety articles for the local media. When regular activities resume, Newman will also organize public events and will be available for presentations.

“The main goal is to keep our community safe by working to prevent emergencies before they happen, using prevention methodologies such as public education and community outreach,” she says.

Newman hit the ground running on her first day of work — she had one week to make preparations for Virtual Safety Days (see related story, below). While her focus is on emergency prevention, she will also continue to serve as an EMT.

Newman’s father, Tom, a Seattle firefighter, started his career as a volunteer 20 years ago in Belfair at what was then called Mason County Fire District 2 (MCFD-2).

“Being raised by a firefighter, I have always had a great amount of respect and admiration for the men and women who work in emergency services,” Newman says.

With a passion for helping others, she

pursued a bachelor’s degree in psychology, with minors in sociology and family studies. While working as a flight attendant in 2014, Newman had the opportunity to help passengers who had medical emergencies during flights.

Through those experiences, she realized she also had a passion for emergency services. She became a volunteer with Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue and later a career firefighter/EMT.

Newman lived in Belfair for the first 15 years of her life. Following her father’s local volunteer work, her sister, Courtney, spent some time as a resident for MCFD-2.

“As a kid, I remember coming to Station 21 and being the ‘patient’ for fire and EMS drills while my dad and my sister volunteered,” she says.

As an adult, she’s thrilled to work out of the very same station, with some of the same firefighters her father and her sister trained with.

“This community is a huge part of what shaped me into the person I am today,” Newman says. “It’s such a privilege to be back here, serving my hometown. I love that this job allows me to connect with community members and think proactively how to keep our community safe.”

Safety Days Go Virtual

Launched in 1997, Safety Days is one of NMRFA’s most successful programs. During this annual event, firefighters spend a day at the elementary schools for fun, interactive activities that teach a variety of safety skills to more than a thousand K-5 students.

Last spring, schools were closed and students were learning remotely due to COVID-19. This put a wrinkle in Safety Days plans. Instead of cancelling the event, NMRFA adapted to the situation.

“It was super disappointing that we couldn’t link up with students, but we didn’t want to miss an opportunity to try to interact in a different format,” says Chief Beau Bakken.

Traditionally, NMRFA and other emergency agencies partner with the North Mason School District to set up safety stations at each school. Throughout the day, students rotate through the different stations.

“The goal is to teach important safety information to the kids in our community and remind them to take proper safety precautions as they head into the summer months,” says NMRFA Emergency Prevention Specialist Lacey Newman.

To replace the in-person event this year, NMRFA provided the school district with five safety videos. The topics included bike helmet safety, life jacket safety, fire safety, the dangers of carbon monoxide, and knowing when and how to call 911.

“The videos were created in one very busy week,” says Newman, who was tasked with the project on her first day on the job.

Newman wrote the scripts, filmed and edited the videos, all within one week. Many members of NMRFA stepped up to be the talent for the series. Chief Bakken and his son, along with emergen-

Learn Safety Virtually

Want to view the safety videos? Visit northmasonrfa.com or the NorthMasonRFA page on Facebook.

cy responders Ryan Cloud, Kyler Gracey, Cooper Lindsey, Lt. Laura Chester and Tanner Zuber, starred in the videos.

The schools posted the videos on their websites, encouraging students to watch them independently. Bakken notes that Virtual Safety Days reached two new demographics this year: parents and homeschooled students.

“Parents watched the videos alongside their kids, and they would never get that information if we were just at the schools,” he says.

One outcome was an increase in requests for bicycle helmets and prevention services, compared to previous years. The total reach far surpassed the traditional Safety Days, as the videos were also posted on the NMRFA Facebook page. Four of the five videos brought 2,500 views each on Facebook. The most popular topic, life jacket safety, had nearly 4,000 views. Total views for all five videos reached nearly 13,000.

“We heard a lot of positive feedback from members of the community,” Newman says. “I am so glad we were still able to get this important safety information out to the public, in the midst of the pandemic, and do it in a way that people enjoyed.”



Firefighter/paramedic Ryan Cloud demonstrates bike safety for a safety video with help from Rowan Bakken.

Anthony ‘Mr. Do Everything’ Rhead — Firefighter of Many Talents



When equipment like an emergency light or a radio needs replacement parts, firefighters can't simply run to the nearest hardware store.

These types of problems are simple in everyday life — but in emergency services, there's usually a process.

Luckily for North Mason's team, “Mr. Do Everything” — a.k.a. Anthony (Tony) Rhead — most likely has the answer. The firefighter/EMT has been with the Fire Authority for 15 years and has “picked up little things along the way.”

“If we ran into an issue and nobody knew the answers, somebody had to find out,” he explains.

He frequently volunteered to be that somebody, and over the years this experience has built up to broad knowledge on how to handle almost any situation.

His quest for knowledge doesn't only come in these reactive scenarios — Rhead often thinks proactively as well.

“Tony lives and breathes improvements to the fleet and is always looking for things that enhance public safety and firefighter safety,” says Assistant Chief Scott Cooper. “Sometimes I wonder if he sleeps at night or if he's researching — he has a lot of ideas on how to improve operations.”

When not busy responding to calls, Rhead does a little bit of everything.

He recently coordinated the water rescue program for the Fire Authority. Additionally, he's on the Apparatus Specifications Committee, which designs NMRFA's new rigs. He's also an integral part of the wildland fire program. Not only does Rhead frequently deploy on wildland fires, but each spring he ensures that the brush trucks and other supplies are ready for the wildland season.

“He does it all, and is constantly doing apparatus upgrades and fixing things,” says Capt. Ryan Cleveland, Rhead's shift captain.

The Biggest Win

Rhead's greatest impact is perhaps the \$380,000 Assistance to Firefighters Grant received from FEMA this summer for a new water tender (see related story, page 2). The grant is highly competitive and numerous fire agencies apply for the funds each year.

“The process is very thorough and you have to put a lot of work into explaining how it's going to help the local area,” Rhead says.

He wrote the application last year for a \$500,000 multipurpose rig that combined

a water tender and a fire truck. Applications go through several rounds, and those with the highest scores are funded during early rounds. Unfortunately, FEMA ran out of funds before reaching NMRFA's request.

Rhead saw another opportunity and received Chief Beau Bakken's green light to try again. Rhead spent hours researching fire departments that had received grants for water tenders, to find out what they had done differently.

“I talked to chiefs and captains who were willing to share the strategies they thought helped them,” he says. “I came up with a strategy to scale back what I asked for, and for how to justify it.”

The hard work paid off through one email this past August, when FEMA notified Chief Bakken that NMRFA's grant was approved. Rhead didn't learn about the grant award until two days later, as he'd been on vacation and out of cell phone range. Chief couldn't reach him right away with the great news.

“If it wasn't for Tony, there's no way we would have received the grant,” Cleveland says.

This isn't Rhead's first awarded grant. He was one of the driving forces that made it possible for NMRFA to receive a \$12,000 grant for hazmat response supplies and another \$12,000 grant toward the purchase of a brush truck. The equipment and apparatus acquired from these grants will serve NMRFA for years to come.

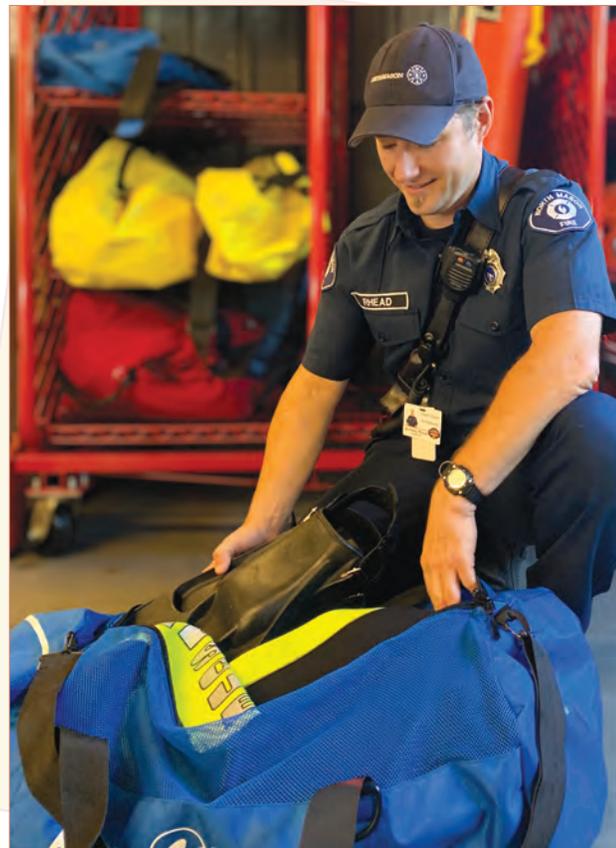
An Evolution of Skills

One experience that helped enhance Rhead's grant application writing skills was the knowledge acquired through his participation in the Managing Officer Program, administered through the U.S. Fire Administration. This two-year program is focused on developing professional and personal skills in change management and risk reduction for leaders in emergency services. Because of this program, Rhead has learned how to better use data in fire services.

“The program is not teaching you to be an incident commander — it's about everything else in the background,” Rhead says. “It makes you more aware of what's going on, why that's happening in the

community and what you can do within your organization to prevent the incident or improve your response.”

Soon, Rhead will have even more data that may lead to future improvements. As part of his culmination project, he's



been managing the Fire Authority's drone program. Capt. Jeromy Hicks began the trial program before leaving NMRFA — and Rhead proposed reviving it for his final project and paper.

He received his drone pilot certification in November 2019 and has been collecting data ever since.

“The drone gives us an eye in the sky, whether it's a drowning victim or a wildfire scene, before we engage,” he says. “It gives us a view that we don't get from the ground, so we know what resources we need.”

Rhead doesn't currently have a new grant in mind, but there's no doubt that before long, Mr. Do Everything will come up with another project to progress NMRFA toward better serving our community.

Fire Prevention: Cooking with Care

By Lacey Newman, Emergency Prevention Specialist

Kitchen fires are the most common cause of home fires, with 44 percent of reported home fires originating there. As the holiday season quickly approaches and many of you prepare to cook up your favorite holiday meals, we want to take the time to review some important fire safety tips to help keep you and your loved ones safe.

Prepare:

Be sure there are working smoke detectors installed in every bedroom, outside of bedrooms, and on every level of the home. Smoke detectors are a life-saving tool, as they allow you valuable time needed to evacuate your home in the event of a fire.

Smoke rises, so it's important to mount smoke alarms high on walls or ceilings. Wall-mounted alarms should be installed within 1 foot of the ceiling.

Proper placement is key. Ensure that your smoke alarms are installed at least 10 feet from your cooking appliances to minimize bothersome false alarms while cooking. False alarms often lead people to remove the battery, rendering the smoke alarm useless.

Prevent:

Keep kids at least 3 feet from the stove and areas where hot food or drinks are being prepared.

Keep anything capable of catching fire away from the stovetop. This includes potholders, oven mitts, curtains, loose shirt sleeves and countless other objects.

Keep your stovetop, oven and burners clean. Remnants of food and grease in and on your appliances increase the risk of a kitchen fire.

Stay in the kitchen at all times while frying, grilling or broiling food. If you must leave, be sure to turn off the stove before exiting the kitchen.

Check your food regularly if you are simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food. Remain in the home while food is cooking and be sure to use a timer to remind yourself when your food is expected to be done.

Remain alert! Do not cook when you are overly tired or if you have taken medication that makes you drowsy. It is also unsafe to cook if you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Extinguish:

If there is a pan fire on your stovetop, slide a lid over the pan, turn off the stove and let the pan cool.

If you have a grease or oil fire, cover it with a lid and turn the burner off. Never add water to a grease fire, as this will cause the fire to grow and spread rapidly. If you have baking soda nearby, pour it into the pan, put the lid back on top of the pan, and allow the pan to cool.

If a fire starts in the oven, turn the oven off and keep the door closed. After an oven fire, make sure your oven is serviced before you use it again.

Evacuate:

If there is a fire in your home, get out of the house and call 911.

All of us at North Mason Regional Fire Authority wish you and your loved ones a safe and wonderful holiday season.



New Power Gurneys Improve Safety for Patients, Responders

NMREA recently collaborated with Mason County Fire District 3 and Mason County Fire District 6 to obtain a \$360,000 federal grant for new power gurneys. Funded through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, the grant paid for a total of eight power gurneys. NMREA received five of them — one for each ambulance.

“There’s been a push in the industry in the last few years toward battery-powered, electrically operated gurneys as a standard, but they’re very expensive,” says Capt. Carl Ehresman.

The electrically powered equipment has two components. One is the cot itself and the other is a loading module, which is mounted into the ambulance and must meet safety and crash-resistance standards. Once the gurney is locked into the loading

module, the operator can lower and raise it with the touch of a button.

Traditionally, emergency responders have used manually operated cots to transport patients from their location to the ambulance. Lifting those cots into an ambulance is not without risk, both for the patient and the responders, Ehresman explains. For responders, in particular, there’s a high risk of back injuries.

In addition to improving safety, the power gurneys help streamline response. In the past, it took two or more people to load heavy patients, which required sending extra personnel to a scene.

“Now we can have crews available to run the next call, and we’ve improved safety,” Ehresman says. “The power gurneys are an absolute game-changer.”



Capt. Carl Ehresman demonstrates the loading of a power gurney into an ambulance.



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Rescue Swimmer Program Trains NMRFA Responders for Water Emergencies

Surrounded by water, the North Mason area is a popular destination for recreation. To ensure that the local emergency responders are prepared for the unique challenge of water emergencies, NMRFA has implemented a rescue swimmer program.

The program provides training and certification for NMRFA personnel, along with rescue gear. This past summer, all personnel participated in either a water-based rescue class or in-house awareness training.

“Each summer, water recreation becomes bigger and bigger around here, and this summer was our busiest ever,” says Capt. Jordan Reese, NMRFA’s training officer. “Part of our job is to determine risks in our area and mitigate them, and this program is part of that mitigation.”

The training covers aspects such as searching for submerged individuals, responding to a group rescue and providing aid in the water. Rescuers also practice using gear, including wet suits, swimming flippers, gloves, hoods and personal floatation devices.

“It doesn’t matter what time of the year it is because the equipment allows us to provide rescues in any season,” Reese says.

To practice the water rescue tactics and techniques, responders

will attend a recertification class every year.

“We want to prevent accidents, so we hope to train and never have to use these skills — but we’ve already used the training in real-life situations multiple times,” Reese says.

He reminds the community that it’s still important to maintain safe recreation practices.

“First step is for people to be safe, and we know that it’s not always possible,” he says. “But do understand the dangers of getting in the water — and don’t overdo your limits.”



NMRFA personnel practice water rescue in Hood Canal over the summer.