



EMS Levy Continuation - Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the proposed EMS levy?

On August 4, voters will be asked to continue an existing EMS levy to support the North Mason Regional Fire Authority's Emergency Medical Services. The current EMS levy expires on December 31, 2020. The EMS levy funds the professional life-saving services that the Fire Authority provides.

Is this a new tax?

No, this is a continuation of an existing voter-approved property tax levy, **with NO increase**. The Authority's EMS levy has been in place and continuously approved by voters for over 35 years.

Why does the Fire Authority need money for EMS?

The cost of providing emergency medical services is substantial. These costs are primarily funded by ambulance billing fees and an EMS levy. Funds raised by the EMS levy are only used for the provision of emergency medical services, including training for Paramedics and EMTs, related equipment and structures, medical supplies and ambulances.

What does the tax payer receive by continuing the EMS levy?

Voter approval to continue the EMS levy will preserve core EMS services, including Advanced Life Support by Paramedics, Basic Life Support by EMTs, and EMS-based Community Education Programs (CPR training, automatic defibrillators, injury prevention, and other valuable EMS programs).

What is the current EMS levy rate?

The current EMS levy rate for 2020 is 41 cents per \$1000 of assessed property value. EMS levy continuation, if approved by voters, would continue the EMS levy at the exact same rate of 41 cents per \$1000 in 2021, with **NO increase**.

What will the EMS levy continuation cost taxpayers?

The current EMS levy rate of 41 cents per \$1000 of assessed value will cost the owner of a \$250,000 home \$102.50 per year or \$8.54 per month in 2020. Voter approval to continue the EMS levy will cost the owner of a \$250,000 home the exact same \$102.50 per year or \$8.54 per month in 2021, again **NO increase**.

What happens to the EMS Levy after 2021?

After 2021, the EMS Levy collection amount cannot exceed 1%, as a result of Washington State's law on levy limitations (see Tim Eyeman's Initiative 747 approved by voters in 2001).

Do proceeds from the EMS levy cover all costs associated with EMS services in North Mason?

No, EMS levy funding covers less than 40% of the cost associated with providing EMS. Additional funds required to support EMS services are covered by ambulance transport billing.

Does the NMRFA receive any state or federal funding for providing EMS services?

The NMRFA receives Medicaid and Medicare funding for patients who are transported to local hospitals and receive federal or state medical assistance. No other state or federal monies are received for EMS services.

Is this levy for the Harrison Urgent and Primary Care clinic as well?

No, the EMS levy is for NMRFA provided EMS only. The EMS levy does not pay for urgent or primary care services. A separate Hospital District levy is used to pay for urgent and primary care services at the Harrison Belfair Clinic.

Can the levy rate be increased in the next six years?

The EMS levy, like all property tax levies in Washington State is limited to a voter approved (State Initiative 747) annual increase of 1%. No other levy rate escalators are built into this levy continuation request.

Why are some property tax levies permanent and some not?

Over time, public services deemed by voters as most essential have been provided a guaranteed source of funding, while others are considered more discretionary and are subject to periodic voter approval. EMS levies can be on a six-year, ten-year or permanent basis. NMRFA believes that renewing the levy every six years keeps the Fire Authority accountable to its citizens and ensures that voters can weigh-in on the value and quality of the local EMS services. NMRFA values citizen input.