



## Woodinville Fire & Rescue Fire Benefit Charge Overview

### Fire Benefit Charge Notice

In January, the District mails a Fire Benefit Charge (“FBC”) Notice (see attached SAMPLE) to every taxpayer in the District. This Notice provides the following important information:

- It is NOT a bill – do not send money <sup>1</sup>
- Your parcel number and the FBC amount for your property <sup>2</sup>
- The square footage used to calculate the FBC <sup>3</sup>
- Whether or not a fire protection sprinkler discount was included <sup>4</sup>
- That appeals are allowed, when they are due and how to get an appeal form <sup>5</sup>
- When the appeal hearing will be held <sup>6</sup>

### How is the FBC Calculated?

Your FBC is based on the risk and amount of effort that may be required to provide fire suppression services on your property. The FBC applies only to structures that are located on your property and is based on their size and use. *Size* is based on square footage of each structure. *Use* is based on how the structures are categorized: residential, commercial, mobile home or multi-unit (apartment).

### Let’s Discuss Square Footage

As mentioned above, the FBC calculation uses the square footage of each structure on your property. The square footage of these structures is calculated by the King County Department of Assessments. Use your parcel number or address to look up your square footage on the Assessor’s website at: [Department of Assessments Real Property Look-Up](#). When you bought your house, you likely received real estate or mortgage documents that stated the “livable square feet” – this number is most likely different from the square footage used for the FBC calculation, which includes such things as unfinished basements, garages and outbuildings. Although this is generally *not* considered livable space, it *is* property that requires fire suppression services.

### Discounts

Properties with fire protection sprinkler systems receive a 30 percent discount on the FBC. If we have a record of your sprinkler system, the discount will be applied. When you receive your annual Fire Benefit Charge Notice in the mail, you will see confirmation of this by “Fire Protection Sprinkler Discount [Y]”. If you have a fire protection sprinkler system and the Notice

indicates “Fire Protection Sprinkler Discount [N],” you may file an appeal with supporting documentation to receive a discount. See the section titled *Appeals and Hearing*.

The State of Washington has a Property Tax Exemption Program for qualified senior citizens and disabled persons. The qualifiers are: age and disability; ownership; residency; and household income. This is NOT a program administered by Woodinville Fire & Rescue. If you feel you may qualify for this program, you must apply through the King County Department of Assessments at: [Property Tax Exemption Program](#). If you have questions about the program, you may call the Assessor’s office at 206-296-3920.

**Appeals and Hearing**

Before you appeal your FBC over square footage, please read the paragraph titled *Let’s Discuss Square Footage* and look up your actual square footage on the Assessor’s website. Appeals for fire protection sprinkler discounts require supporting documentation.

When you submit an appeal, *you do not need to attend the hearing*. After the hearing, you will receive a letter to let you know the Board’s decision.

**The FBC Formula**

$$[\text{SQRT}(\text{sqft}) * 18] * \text{CF} * \text{CPG} * \text{Discount} = \text{FBC}$$

Category Factors (CF)		
Residential	0.558	
Mobile Home	0.3	
Apartment	0.03	
Commercial 1	2	1 - 9,999 sq ft
Commercial 2	2.5	10,000 - 49,999 sq ft
Commercial 3	3.5	50,000-99,999 sq ft
Commercial 4	4	100,000-199,999 sq ft
Commercial 5	5	200,000-299,000 sq ft
Commercial 6	7	300,000 + sq ft

**Cost Per Gallon (CPG)** 0.6010625300  
 Determined by dividing the Total Benefit Charge by the Total Fire Flow (SQRT(totalsqft)\*18) of the District. **TotBC/TotFF=CPG**

Discounts	
Sr. Citizen S	0.75
Sr. Citizen P	0.5
Sr. Citizen F	0.25
Sprinkler	0.7

1 Parcel #

3 Square Feet

2 Benefit Charge

4 Fire Protection Sprinkler Discount [ Y : N ]



Woodinville Fire & Rescue  
17718 Woodinville-Snohomish Rd. NE  
P.O. Box 2200  
Woodinville, WA 98072

PRSRST STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
OLYMPIA, WA  
PERMIT NO. 583

### FIRE BENEFIT CHARGE IMPORTANT NOTICE - DO NOT DISCARD

As a property owner in Woodinville Fire & Rescue's service area, you will receive a property tax statement from the King County Department of Assessments in the next few months. The benefit charge will appear on this statement under the "Fire" heading.

As required by Washington state law, WF&R provides a process that allows property owners to appeal benefit charges they believe are incorrect or invalid. Forms for requesting an appeal are available at WF&R's main office located at 17718 Woodinville-Snohomish Road NE. Our business hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You may also download copies of the form from our website: <http://www.wf-r.org> or call 425-483-2131 and we will put one in the mail to you.

Benefit charge appeals must be received by WF&R no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 13, 2017. A hearing on all appeal requests received by the deadline will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, 2017.

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## Woodinville Fire & Rescue

P.O. Box 2200 • 17718 Woodinville-Snohomish Rd NE  
Woodinville, WA 98072  
Phone 425-483-2131 • Fax 425-486-0361

### **THIS LETTER CONTAINS INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FIRE BENEFIT CHARGE**

### **THIS IS NOT A BILL**

Woodinville Fire & Rescue (WF&R) works hard to deliver emergency services that exceed citizen expectations. The commitment of our personnel to deliver compassionate, dependable and accountable services includes efforts to keep our costs low and adhere to prudent fiscal practices.

WF&R depends upon two separate but related income streams to fund its operations. The first, a property tax, reflects the value of properties in the District. The second source of revenue, the benefit charge, is tied to the area of buildings and other improvements to property, which more closely approximates the fire risk to property and the service required from WF&R. Since fires in properties protected by automatic fire sprinklers tend to be much smaller, these properties qualify for significant discounts to benefit charge rates. Low income senior citizens who qualify for reduced property taxes may also qualify for a reduction in the amount of the benefit charge.

Unlike taxes, the benefit charge is not based on each property's assessed value. It is based on the total square footage of buildings, garages, barns, stables, etc. on the property and the use of the property. In this regard, the owner of a commercial building of like-square footage would pay more than a residential homeowner.

The ability to adjust benefit charge levels in each budget cycle has enabled the Board of Fire Commissioners to maintain WF&R's service levels. As a result, residents with homes valued at or near the median home price have experienced little or no change in the direct cost of fire service over the last several years. As the economy continues to recover, we continue to focus on rebuilding our reserve funds for apparatus, equipment replacement purchases and other necessary capital expenditures.

Your Board of Fire Commissioners and District staff have worked diligently to focus our efforts on the programs that matter most to local residents by managing our budget and costs.

We greatly appreciate your continued support in helping us provide the best possible service to our community.

Sincerely,

Kevin Coughlin, Chair  
Board of Fire Commissioners

*Prepare – Prevent – Perform*

[www.wf-r.org](http://www.wf-r.org)