

How would annexation affect FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES?

What does Renton provide in East Renton?

Today, the City of Renton already provides fire and emergency medical services by contract to Fire District 25 in the East Renton area. The East Renton Potential Annexation area is served primarily by Renton Fire Station 16 located at 12923 156th Avenue SE. This station is staffed 24 hours a day with three on-duty personnel including one fire officer and two firefighters. Fire Engine 16 and Aid Car 16 are assigned to the station and are “cross staffed” by the personnel on-duty, meaning the crew will use the fire engine for fire-related incidents and the aid car for emergency medical related incidents. Valley Communications, a consolidated dispatch center for the majority of South King County, provides dispatch services. Response times from call receipt to arrival on scene average 5 minutes and 43 seconds.¹

What services does the Renton Fire Department provide, generally?

Fire and Emergency Services include services intended to minimize the loss of life, protect property and the environment, and bring emergency situations to a conclusion in the shortest time possible. As one of the basic services of local government, these services are rarely impacted during annexation activities. Fire and emergency services in the City of Renton include:

Community Risk Reduction. These are services intended to reduce the overall risk to citizens from incidents, emergencies and disasters. These include :

- *Public Education* in fire safety, injury prevention, and home emergency preparedness.
- *Building Construction Plan Review*
- *Fire and Life Safety Inspections*
- *Fire Case and Origin Investigations*
- *Emergency Management* including a “state of the art” emergency operations center.

In unincorporated areas of King County adjacent to the City of Renton, community risk reduction services are currently provided primarily by the King County Fire Marshal with a staff of 13 for all of unincorporated King County, compared to a staff of 11 for the City of Renton.

Emergency Management is handled by King County Office of Emergency Management, who has county wide responsibility for emergency management in cooperation with local fire protection districts. If annexed to the City of Renton, only the local coordination would change.

Response Operations consists of response services during emergencies or incidents where life or property is threatened. They include:

¹ Response times calculated from the receipt of the 9-1-1 call at Valley Communications to the arrival of the first fire department unit on priority incidents from June 1, 2004 through December 13, 2006.

- Emergency response to:
 - Uncontrolled fires
 - Medical emergencies and transport to local medical facilities if required
 - Hazardous material releases
 - Rescue situations involving vehicle crashes, machinery related accidents, industrial accidents, and water related emergencies including dive rescue and recovery.
- Non-emergency response to situations such as:
 - Fire alarm activations where there is no apparent fire
 - Minor water incidents such as residential basement flooding
 - Investigations of unidentified odors of a potential chemical nature

The City of Renton has five strategically located fire stations and twice the on-duty staffing of the adjacent fire districts combined. The City of Renton is an owner agency of Valley Communications who dispatches all fire resources in South King County. Through mutual aid, the City assists fire districts and the districts assist the City as needed based on the type of incident or emergency. Other than the patches on the uniforms of some of the responders, little regarding response operations will change as a result of annexation.

What other changes might occur with annexation?

If the East Renton Plateau annexed, citizens would no longer pay \$1.25 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation in property taxes to Fire District 25, and the service would then be covered instead by Renton's general fund tax revenues. There would be a loss of revenue to the City of Renton of approximately \$900,000 from contract payments for the annexation area.

Certain services, including fire investigation, fire inspection, plans review and public information are currently provided by King County and will become the City's responsibility if the area is annexed. However, there are so few commercial properties that the effect on the Department would be minimal.