

Questions About the Fire Levy Lid Lift?

We have the answers.

What's on my ballot?

Benton County Fire District #1 is asking voters to renew the fire levy at the previously voter-approved amount of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The proposal will be on the August 5, 2025, primary election ballot.

How do we fund emergency services?

Emergency services are funded through a fire levy capped at \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The fire district does not have an EMS levy, which means we also fund emergency medical services out of the fire levy. EMS calls account for 68% of all emergency responses.

Over time, levy rates fall as property values rise to restrict the fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year plus any amount approved by voters. For example, voters renewed the fire levy at \$1.50/\$1,000 in 2018 and it has fallen to \$1.23 in 2025.

Is my fire district funded by Benton County?

No. BCFD#1 is a separate taxing district and receives no funding from Benton County.

Why is my fire district proposing a lid lift?

Call volumes continue to increase. (EMS calls alone have increased 58% since voters last renewed the fire levy in 2018.) More calls mean higher costs and those costs are even higher due to inflation. Many of these costs are also out of the fire district's control. For example, the cost for a fire engine has almost doubled. Insurance costs have increased 118%, IT and cyber security is 88% higher, and 911 dispatch services are up 86%.

These cost increases impact our ability to provide the level and quality of service our community requires. Service levels also are linked to the amount residents pay for homeowner's and renter's insurance.

What will it cost?

The \$0.27/\$1,000 lid lift will cost an additional \$4.96 per month/ \$59.50 per year for the owner of property with an assessed value of \$422,420 (considered average). Homeowners who meet income and eligibility requirements will continue to qualify for a property tax exemption.

What will the lid lift fund?

- Three full-time firefighter/EMTs to respond to higher call volumes and accommodate volunteer work and family schedules
- A new extractor washing machine to thoroughly clean firefighter gear and help limit exposure to carcinogens and dangerous chemicals
- Replacing an ambulance and medical equipment
- Maintaining facilities to extend their usable lives, such as Station 120 on Finley Road

Learn more at www.bentonone.org, or contact Fire Chief Scott LoParco at 509-737-0911 or scott@bentonone.org. Thank you for considering our request.