

# Proposition 1:

## Mill Creek Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy

Voters in Mill Creek will find Proposition 1 on the mail-in ballot for the Primary Election on August 17, 2010.

In this fact sheet, common questions about the levy are addressed. Please don't hesitate to contact the City with questions or concerns at 425-745-1891 or [kelly@cityofmillcreek.com](mailto:kelly@cityofmillcreek.com).

### Why is renewing Mill Creek's EMS levy necessary?

Mill Creek's emergency medical care is partially funded by the EMS levy. This process requires renewal every six years. The current levy was approved by the Mill Creek citizens in 2004 at a rate of 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

### Improving EMS availability and response times

While the city of Mill Creek's size, population and call volume have increased over time, fire and EMS coverage has not changed. The chart below shows the growth over the last 19 years. The size of the city has almost doubled, the population has tripled, and the call volume has increased by more than five times, while Fire/EMS protection has remained constant.

In 2009, Station 76 (the Mill Creek Fire Station) was unavailable 24.4 percent of the time they were dispatched to an emergency. Reasons range from transporting a patient to responding to a fire, Station 76 was simply not able to handle the call. When this occurs, the next closest station is dispatched to the emergency.

	1990	2000	2009
Size (square miles)	2.72	3.56	4.68
Population	5,920	11,525	18,480
# of calls	282	989	1,670
# of firefighters providing fire/EMS coverage in Mill Creek	3*	3	3

\*Three firefighters from Station 72 (in Fire District 7) served the city of Mill Creek until 1993, when the first Mill Creek Fire Station opened. This station has since had three firefighters dedicated to serving the city of Mill Creek.

The objective is to increase the staffing at Station 76, to offset the out of service times. Two firefighters would be added to each shift at Station 76 (for a total of eight firefighter EMTs and/or paramedics), allowing the fire engine and an aid or medic unit to be staffed independently. Having two separate apparatus that can respond from Station 76 would improve service to the citizens, increase availability, improve response times and increase firefighter safety.

### What do the levy funds pay for?

In 2009, Fire District 7 responded to 1,670 emergency calls in Mill Creek. Over 83 percent of those calls were medical related. EMS funding is vital to the delivery of emergency medical care. Labor, fuel and operating costs (including medical supplies, etc.) are increasing five to eight percent annually, while state law sets a one percent limit on property tax increases.

All firefighters provide emergency medical care, and are certified as either Emergency Medical Technicians or Paramedics. When someone dials 911, the closest available unit responds. This often means a fire engine will be first to arrive at a medical call. Staff on a fire engine can provide emergency medical care until an aid or medic unit arrives to transport the patient.

**How much will it cost citizens?**

Currently, the voter approved maximum EMS levy assessment is 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The proposal asks that when the levy is renewed for the next six year term, citizens vote on increasing the levy to 45 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The average Mill Creek assessed home value for 2010 is \$401,200; therefore, the increase for the average household would be \$6.69 per month.

While the city of Mill Creek collects the funds from the EMS levy, we have a contract with Fire District 7 to provide fire and EMS coverage. The current contract for fire and EMS service is approximately 1.4 million dollars per year. The EMS levy generates \$530,191, with the remaining \$878,420 coming from the general fund.

If the EMS levy is approved, the city of Mill Creek and Fire District 7 would then amend the contract to include the expense of the additional firefighters over the term of the levy. The expected cost for the first year would be \$769,796.

**What will happen if the levy is not approved at 45 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation?**

If the levy is not renewed, Mill Creek would lose the \$530,000 per year that is currently generated from the EMS levy. Funding would have to be pulled from elsewhere within the city of Mill Creek's budget to maintain the current level of staffing, resulting in decreased service level for other city services. The three firefighters at Station 76 would have to respond with either the fire engine or the medic unit, thus continuing to rely on other stations in Fire District 7's area or other surrounding jurisdictions to respond to their calls.

**When do citizens vote?**

Proposition 1 will be on the Primary Election, set for August 17, 2010. For additional election information, please contact the Snohomish County Auditor's Office (Elections and Voter Registration Division) at 4125-388-3444