



SKAGIT COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



JOSH PELONIO, DIRECTOR



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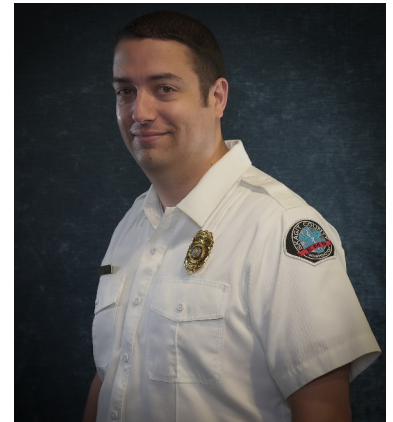
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EMS DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

To the Board of County Commissioners and Skagit County community,

I am pleased to present the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department 2024 Annual Report. I hope this report will give you a brief overview of the various operational and administrative aspects of the Skagit County EMS system and our collective achievements in 2024. The Skagit County EMS system is a system of care based on strong regional partnerships as well as collaboration and close coordination between multiple jurisdictions and disciplines working together to serve patients and improve clinical outcomes across the entire county.



I want to recognize that the trust of our community is built and maintained day in and day out by the hard work of the dedicated men and women of our EMS system who respond to members of our community in need on a 24 / 7 / 365 basis. On behalf of all of our EMS system stakeholders, we are grateful for the support of our community in renewing the countywide EMS property tax levy in the April 2024 special election. The EMS levy remains a reliable and stable source of funding for our countywide coordinated system and the increasing demands placed upon it.

In late 2024, the Washington State Department of Health completed a multi-year rulemaking process which opened for revision 33 sections of the Washington Administrative Code chapter pertaining to the EMS and Trauma Care system in our state. We enter into 2025 continuing to work on updating processes, policies, procedures, and patient care protocols and adapting our EMS initial and ongoing education and training programs to bring them into compliance with the newly adopted state EMS rules.

Thank you for your continued support of Skagit County EMS. Rest assured that when you dial 911 in Skagit County, our EMS System is committed to delivering the right people, with the right training and the right equipment, to the right place, to give you the best possible chance at a positive outcome, every time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Pelonio'.

Josh Pelonio

Director

Skagit County EMS



EMS SYSTEM OVERVIEW

When residents and visitors of Skagit County need emergency assistance, they call 911 and expect the highest level of emergency medical services from the Skagit County EMS System. Through collaborative partnerships, the Skagit County EMS System provides Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) emergency medical services and when necessary, transport to definitive healthcare.

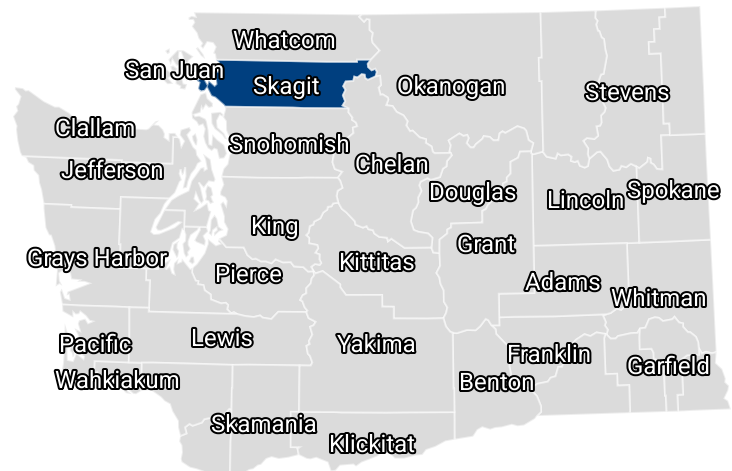
Basic Life Support services are provided by the various fire districts and town fire departments including both paid and volunteer emergency medical responders and emergency medical technicians that serve those communities.

Advanced Life Support services are provided by Aero Skagit Emergency Services, and the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley Fire Departments.

Air Transport (helicopter) services are provided by Life Flight Network and Airlift Northwest.

The Skagit County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department is an oversight, quality assurance, and support agency that serves the residents and visitors of Skagit County by: monitoring the performance of contracted county EMS providers, facilitating a standardized countywide patient care reporting system, and providing a standardized EMS ongoing training and evaluation program. Other responsibilities include overseeing EMS credential initial issuance and recertification, and providing administrative support to the Department of Health appointed EMS Physician Medical Program Director and their delegate physician (s).

Regional EMS system partnerships include the North Region EMS & Trauma Care Council, the Skagit County EMS & Trauma Care Council Advisory Board, Skagit Valley Hospital, Island Hospital, PeaceHealth United General Hospital, Skagit County Fire Chief's Association, Skagit County Fire Commissioner's Association, Skagit 911, Skagit County Department of Emergency Management, Skagit County Coroner's Office, Skagit County Public Health, Skagit County Sheriff's Office, and Skagit County Search & Rescue.



EMS SYSTEM PARTNERS

911 COMMUNICATIONS PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT



BASIC LIFE SUPPORT PROVIDERS

Skagit County Fire District #2
Skagit County Fire District #3
Skagit County Fire District #4
Skagit County Fire District #5
Skagit County Fire District #6
Skagit County Fire District #7
Skagit County Fire District #8
Skagit County Fire District #9
Skagit County Fire District #11
Skagit County Fire District #12
Skagit County Fire District #13

Skagit County Fire District #14
Skagit County Fire District #15
Skagit County Fire District #16
Skagit County Fire District #17
Skagit County Regional Fire Authority
Town of Concrete Fire Department
Town of Hamilton Fire Department
Town of La Conner Fire Department
Skagit County Search & Rescue
Skagit County Sheriff's Office

ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT PROVIDERS



MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

Our Mission

To support a system of innovative, patient-centered, pre-hospital care through:

- Supervision of initial and ongoing EMS education and training for Skagit County EMS personnel
- Support of public access to health, safety, and injury prevention training programs
- Development and implementation of patient care protocols and standard operating guidelines
- Data collection and analytics, system-wide focused initiatives and quality assurance measures
- Collaboration and participation in local, regional, and state stakeholder groups



Our Vision

Assuring a comprehensive, reliable, and sustainable EMS system based on continuous quality improvement, clinically exceptional and culturally competent care for our community.

MEET OUR TEAM



Josh Pelonio
EMS Director



Dr. Matthew Russell, M.D.
Medical Program Director



Freya Peebles
Administrative Coordinator



Wayne Scoles
Data Specialist



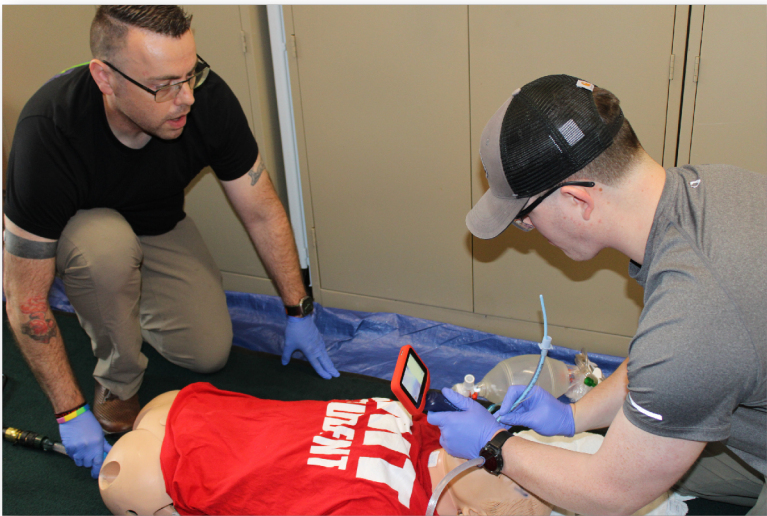
Jill Hoogerhyde
Training Specialist

EMS TRAINING & EDUCATION

Skagit County EMS provides a standardized state-approved EMS ongoing training program for all EMS personnel affiliated with contracted partner agencies who participate in the Skagit County EMS system. Approved instructor resources, practical skills evaluation sheets and other instructional materials are developed by Skagit County EMS and are approved by the Medical Program Director to ensure standardized content and consistent instruction throughout the county. This also allows for focused training initiatives responsive to trending clinical care or protocol compliance issues identified through internal and external quality improvement processes.



2024 EMS TRAINING COURSES CONDUCTED		
BLS SKILLS LAB (OTEP)	ALS SKILLS LAB (OTEP)	RUN REVIEW MEETINGS
86	13	12
ACLS & PALS	COMPREHENSIVE AIRWAY MANAGEMENT	EMS EVALUATOR
6	2	3



EMS PROTOCOLS & MEDICAL OVERSIGHT

EMS Protocols & Patient Care Guidelines

In March 2024, we completed a multi-year project resulting in the first full revision of the Skagit County EMS Patient Care Guidelines (a.k.a. EMS protocols). Previously, the protocols used by EMTs were significantly different than those used by Paramedics. The new version combines Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) protocols into a single document to help bring EMT and Paramedic care components into alignment and allow for better coordinated patient care.

Skagit County EMS Protocols can be downloaded to Android or iOS devices or accessed online at:



EMS Medical Program Director

The Medical Program Director (MPD) is a physician appointed by the Washington State Department of Health who is recognized to be knowledgeable in their county's administration and management of pre-hospital emergency medical care and services. The MPD has the ultimate responsibility for all activities in the EMS system including clinical oversight, developing written patient care guidelines, directing patient care, and being a conduit of information from local EMS and Trauma systems to state staff for purposes of training, certification, audit, and if necessary, discipline of EMS providers.

MPD duties are required by statute RCW 18.71.212 and are described in WAC 246-976-920. Skagit County contracts with two local physicians who provide clinical oversight to the EMS system:

Dr. Matthew Russell, M.D.
EMS Medical Program Director

Dr. Mike Lanker, D.O.
EMS Medical Program Director Delegate

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

ANNUAL COUNTYWIDE EMS INCIDENT VOLUME HISTORY

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
15,777	15,469	16,526	18,037	18,222	18,485

Data Source: Skagit County Public Safety System Spillman Flex™ CAD

2024 COUNTYWIDE EMS INCIDENT VOLUME BY HOUR OF DAY, DAY OF WEEK

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
0:00	77	80	65	61	67	63	69
01:00	83	58	59	64	61	51	74
02:00	64	42	53	47	52	54	47
03:00	55	46	51	45	54	52	57
04:00	54	54	42	49	52	43	56
05:00	45	58	47	76	61	62	51
06:00	63	79	67	79	89	62	80
07:00	51	110	102	96	92	78	79
08:00	98	125	109	132	121	119	114
09:00	119	162	156	136	167	166	130
10:00	130	169	164	151	163	160	146
11:00	138	155	169	146	174	163	153
12:00	137	169	140	123	173	160	162
13:00	133	156	156	165	149	175	155
14:00	137	156	158	175	148	166	166
15:00	137	153	156	171	167	145	137
16:00	130	144	171	157	169	176	132
17:00	130	139	131	152	151	150	149
18:00	123	134	141	121	121	155	158
19:00	108	156	134	151	123	117	149
20:00	94	103	121	97	114	132	136
21:00	84	92	105	104	97	120	118
22:00	80	102	94	84	92	108	76
23:00	84	68	69	66	53	72	86

Data Source: Skagit 9-1-1 Academy Analytics™ by FirstWatch®

2024 EMS INCIDENT TIME AVERAGES

AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME

8:09

AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE

18:16



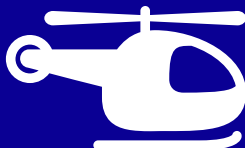
AVERAGE TRANSPORT TIME

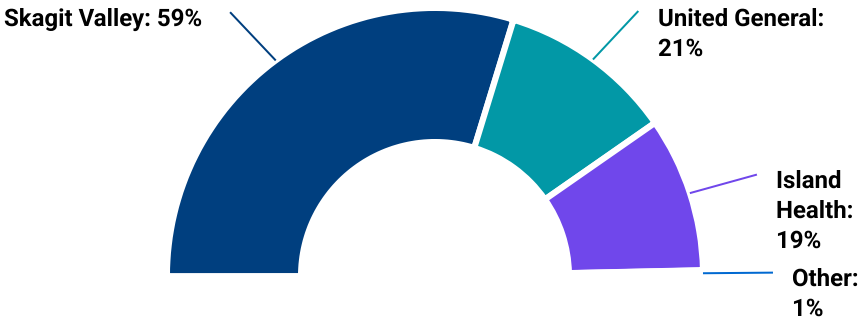
11:08

Data Source: Electronic Health Record System

In 2024, Friday at 4PM (16:00) was on average the highest volume of EMS incidents dispatched.

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

		9,948 total EMS patients transported by ground or air	
SKAGIT VALLEY HOSPITAL			9,905 patients transported by ground ambulance
5,918 patients			
UNITED GENERAL HOSPITAL			43 patients transported by air ambulance
2,104 patients			
ISLAND HEALTH		Data Source: Electronic Health Record System	
1,861 patients			
ST. JOSEPH MEDICAL CENTER			
26 patients		% Patients transported to	
PROVIDENCE/HARBORVIEW/OTHER			
39 patients			



99%

EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH

2024 EMS INCIDENTS BY EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH PROTOCOL		
EMD PROTOCOL	# OF INCIDENTS	% OF INCIDENTS
1 - Abdominal Pain/Problems	502	2.8%
2 - Allergies (Reactions)/Envenomations (Stings/Bites)	103	0.6%
3 - Animal Bites/Attacks	21	0.1%
4 - Assault/Sexual Assault	95	0.5%
5 - Back Pain (Non-Traumatic or Non-Recent Trauma)	159	0.9%
6 - Breathing Problems	1186	6.6%
7 - Burns (Scalds)/Explosion (Blast)	25	0.1%
8 - Carbon Monoxide/Inhalation/HAZMAT/CBRN	11	0.1%
9 - Cardiac or Respiratory Arrest/Death	320	1.8%
10 - Chest Pain (Non-Traumatic)	888	4.9%
11 - Choking	86	0.5%
12 - Convulsions/Seizures	399	2.2%
13 - Diabetic Problems	291	1.6%
14 - Drowning (near)/Diving/SCUBA Accident	12	0.1%
15 - Electrocution/Lightning	4	0.0%
16 - Eye Problems/Injuries	20	0.1%
17 - Falls	3661	20.4%
18 - Headache	80	0.4%
19 - Heart Problems/AICD	429	2.4%
20 - Heat/Cold Exposure	33	0.2%
21 - Hemorrhage/Laceration	461	2.6%
22 - Inaccessible Incident/Other Entrapments (Non-Vehicle)	6	0.0%
23 - Overdose/Poisoning (Ingestion)	354	2.0%
24 - Pregnancy/Childbirth/Miscarriage	45	0.3%
25 - Psychiatric/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide Attempt	380	2.1%

EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH

2024 EMS INCIDENTS BY EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH PROTOCOL		
EMD PROTOCOL	# OF INCIDENTS	% OF INCIDENTS
26 - Sick Person (Specific Diagnosis)	3392	18.9%
27 - Stab/Gunshot/Penetrating Trauma	27	0.2%
28 - Stroke (CVA)/Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)	400	2.2%
29 - Traffic/Transportation Incidents	960	5.3%
30 - Traumatic Injuries (Specific)	289	1.6%
31 - Unconscious/Fainting (Near)	1089	6.1%
32 - Unknown Problem (Man Down)	1179	6.6%
33 - Transfer/Interfacility/Palliative Care	8	0.0%
34 - Automatic Crash Notification (ACN)	135	0.8%
37 - Interfacility Evaluation / Transfer	29	0.2%
38 - Advanced Send (radio request by law or fire/EMS unit)	892	5.0%

Data Source: Skagit 9-1-1 Academy Analytics™ by FirstWatch®

Top 10 EMD
Protocols

EMS LEVY RENEWAL

Skagit County coordinates a countywide EMS system providing 24/7 life-saving medical response and ambulance transport to area hospitals. EMS call volume has increased which is primarily due to the area's growth and aging population. More calls mean higher costs for everything from medical supplies to emergency personnel to ambulance replacement.

The Skagit County EMS system is primarily funded by a countywide EMS property tax levy which must be renewed every six years and expired at the end of 2024.

On January 16, 2024 the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners held a public hearing to consider a resolution to place an emergency medical services (EMS) levy renewal on the April 23, 2024 special election ballot.

On January 30th the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution to place an EMS levy renewal on the April 23, 2024 special election ballot to ask voters to renew the levy at a rate of \$0.47 to manage higher call volumes and costs to provide services.

During the months of March and April 2024, the EMS Department presented information on the EMS levy renewal ballot measure to Anacortes, Burlington, and Sedro-Woolley City Councils and the community was invited to five different Q&A sessions to learn more about the EMS levy renewal and to ask questions.

The special election results were certified on May 3, 2024 and the EMS levy renewal was passed by Skagit County voters with a 70.85% majority.

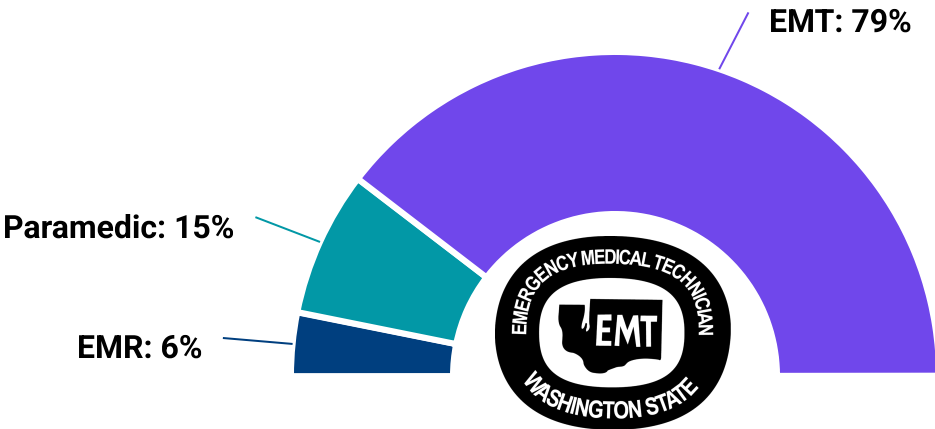
We want to thank our community for their continued support of the EMS Levy. We are grateful our community sees the value of emergency medical services and the funding ensures our partners can continue to provide 24/7 EMS response and be there when you need us.

Thank you for your partnership in keeping our community safe.



EMS CREDENTIALING

CREDENTIALING APPLICATIONS PROCESSED		
INITIAL EMR	INITIAL EMT	INITIAL PARAMEDIC
3	75	5
RENEWAL EMR	RENEWAL EMT	RENEWAL PARAMEDIC
2	114	21
EMS EVALUATOR	SUPRAGLOTTIC AIRWAY ENDORSEMENT	IV THERAPY ENDORSEMENT
28	18	2



SPECIAL EVENTS & RECOGNITION



SPECIAL EVENTS & RECOGNITION

On October 28, 2024, the Board of County Commissioners hosted an appreciation event for Skagit County First Responders and signed a proclamation recognizing October 28, 2024 as First Responders Day.

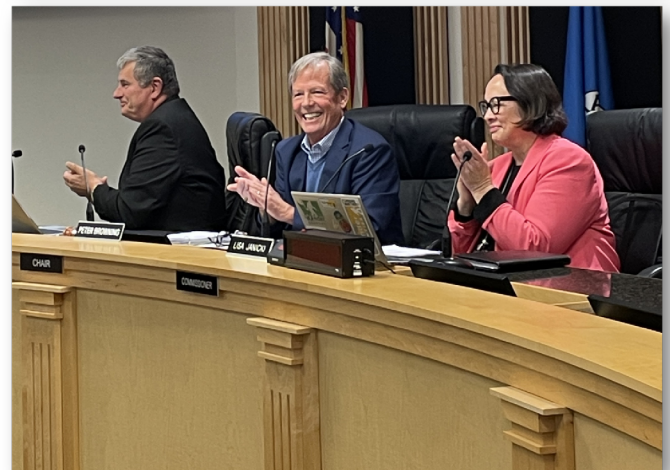
City of Mount Vernon Mayor, Peter Donovan, Skagit 911 Deputy Operations Manager, Tiffany Beisler, Skagit County Fire District 14 Chief, David Skrinde, and retired Paramedic David Montague thanked the first responders for their hard work, dedication and courage.

Chair Browning read the Proclamation designating October 28 as Skagit County Annual First Responders' Day and encouraged the people of Skagit County to honor our local first responders with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of their many contributions to our community's health, safety, and wellbeing.

Certificates from the Skagit County First Responder Foundation were presented to:

- Retired Paramedic David Montague
- Retired Paramedic Al Carlin
- Retired Paramedic Ken Lange
- Retired Paramedic Orland Freeman
- Retired Paramedic Jay Fallihee
- Retired Paramedic Carol Meyers
- Retired Paramedic Dennis Taylor

Sheriff Don McDermott, and former City of Mount Vernon Police Chief, Chris Cammock recognized former Skagit County Sheriff Gary Frazier and former Mount Vernon Police Chief, Ron Tarry for their service to Skagit County and presented them with plaques and First Responder Foundation challenge coins.



SPECIAL EVENTS & RECOGNITION

Dr. Ron Richeson Life Saver Award

In September 2024, Officer Bass responded along with deputies from the Skagit County Sheriff's Office to a call for service involving an individual who had sustained a serious life-threatening traumatic injury. Officer Bass not only serves the citizens of Sedro-Woolley as a Police Officer and SWAT Operator, but also serves the citizens of Whatcom County as a Volunteer Firefighter and EMT. Upon arrival, officers worked to secure the scene. Officer Bass used his training and experience to assess the patient and render critical aid, which led directly to the victim's survival. Officer Bass turned over care to arriving firefighter/EMTs from Skagit County Fire District #8 followed by paramedics from Aero Skagit.



Retirement of Skagit 9-1-1 Executive Director Helen Rasmussen

As 2024 came to a close, we had the opportunity to recognize the retirement of Helen Rasmussen, a long-time employee and most recently, Executive Director of Skagit 911, the public safety answering point (PSAP) serving all of Skagit County. Helen's journey with Skagit 911 began on November 24, 1998, when she joined as a lateral from Oklahoma. Over the years, she has held various pivotal roles, including Lead Dispatcher, Supervisor, Training Supervisor, Project Supervisor, and Operations Manager, before taking on the role of Executive Director on May 15, 2015.

On behalf of the Skagit County EMS system, we extend our congratulations on your retirement and appreciation for your many years of service to the citizens of Skagit County and your ongoing partnership and support of the Skagit County EMS system.

Enjoy your retirement!



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

In June of 2024, in conjunction with National CPR & AED Awareness Week, Skagit County EMS launched the PulsePoint Respond smartphone application.

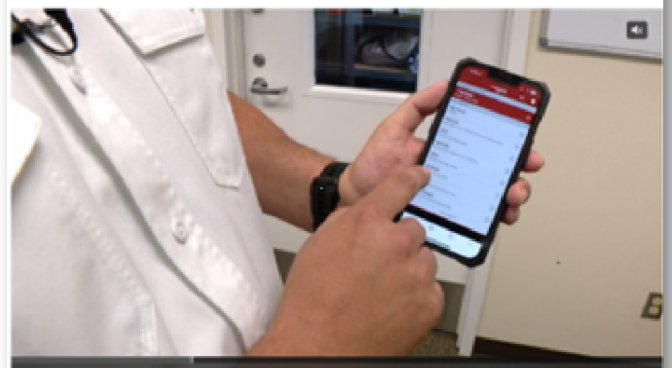
PulsePoint is like an AMBER alert for sudden cardiac arrest events occurring in public places (never private residences). It uses location-based technology to alert CPR-trained community members to a sudden cardiac arrest in their immediate vicinity so they can get to the victim first and start hands-only CPR in those critical, life-saving minutes before first responders are able to arrive.

In addition, the companion app, PulsePoint AED, allows users to report and update public AED (automatic external defibrillator) locations so that community members can find a nearby AED when a cardiac emergency occurs. Skagit 911 dispatchers will also be able to access and share these AED locations with 911 callers.

Download the app, follow Skagit County EMS and join us today!



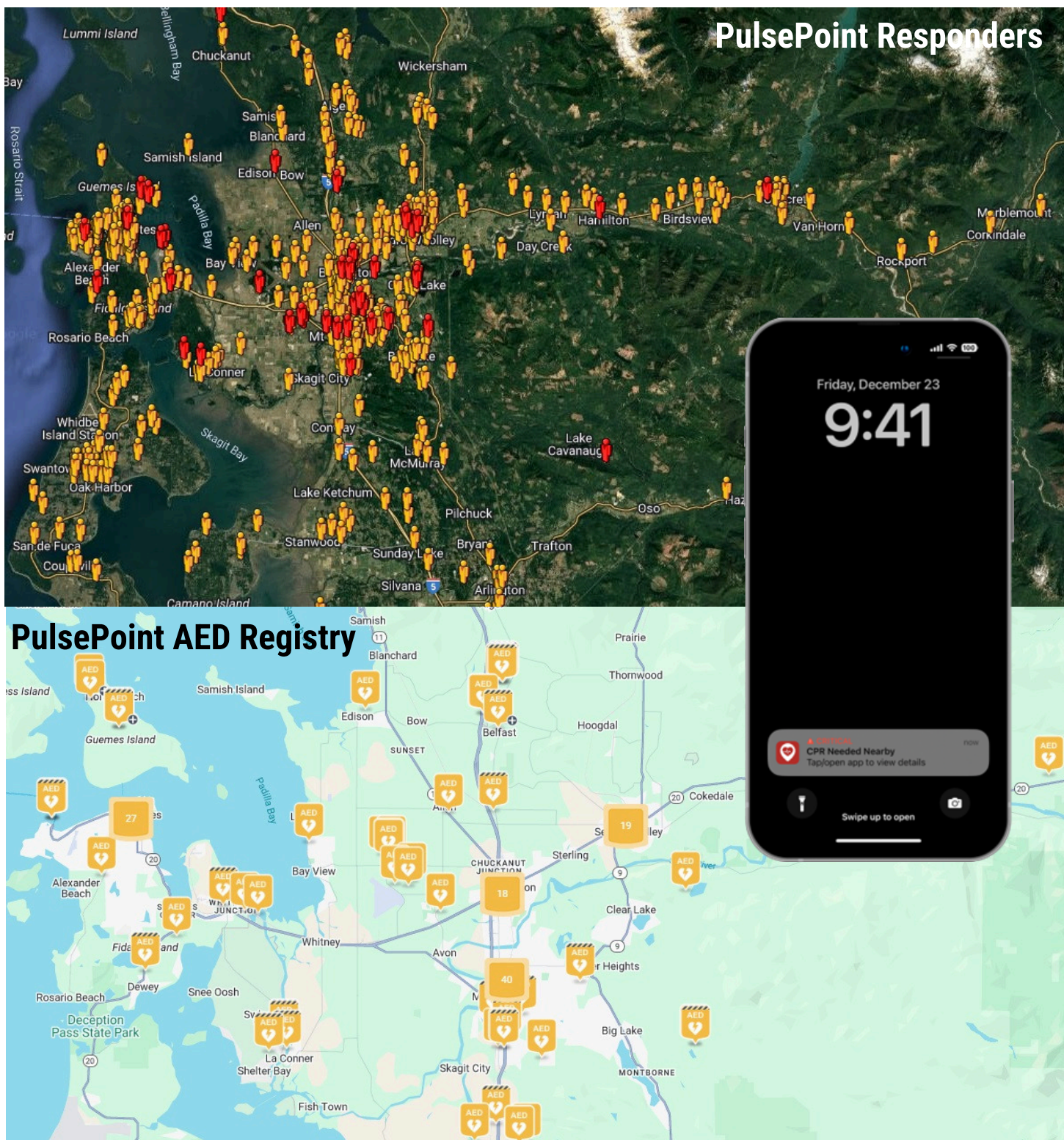
App helps connect civilians who know CPR to nearby cardiac arrest incidents in Skagit County



The PulsePoint app alerts civilians with knowledge of CPR and defibrillators to nearby cardiac arrest incidents.

PulsePoint
RESPOND

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Public First Aid and CPR/AED Training

Skagit County EMS Provider agencies, in partnership with Skagit County EMS provide public first aid and CPR/AED training regularly throughout the year. Learning these valuable skills can help keep someone alive in an emergency until first responders arrive and improve out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival in our community.

High School CPR Program

Since 2013, Washington State law requires all school districts operating high schools to offer instruction in CPR in at least one health class as part of graduation requirements. Local firefighter/EMTs and paramedics with Skagit County EMS provider agencies spend time in our local high schools facilitating this training throughout the year.



Stop The Bleed® Program

This national public education campaign came as a result of the 2012 tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT. A concerned local trauma surgeon who was the Chair of the Connecticut State Committee on Trauma and an ACS Regent, Lenworth M. Jacobs, Jr., MD, FACS, convened a panel of national experts to evaluate the response to such emergencies. The group met several times and developed expert recommendations on how to improve survival for people with severe bleeding. Because two of these early meetings were held in Hartford, their recommendations became known as the Hartford Consensus. Approved Stop the Bleed® training sites in Skagit County include: Skagit County EMS, Skagit Regional Health, and Island Health.



Child Passenger Safety

Skagit County EMS offers child safety seat checks where parents and caregivers can receive education and hands-on assistance with the proper use of child restraint systems and seatbelts by a nationally certified child passenger safety technician. Nationwide, a majority of parents still misuse their child restraints and need help to get it right. Proper child restraints save lives. In most cases, Skagit County EMS can provide car seat checks at our office in Mount Vernon or your local fire department.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Skagit County EMS in partnership with Skagit County Public Health, the Washington State Department of Health and our EMS provider agencies launched an EMS Naloxone Leave Behind Program in 2021. The program has continued to be grant-funded through Department of Health and provides Naloxone at no cost to Skagit County EMS.

Naloxone is a medication that can help save lives by reversing the effects of an opioid overdose. This program allows EMS personnel to provide Naloxone kits to at-risk individuals, an involved bystander, or the family or friends that are at-risk of witnessing an opioid related overdose.

Each kit contains 2 doses of Naloxone nasal spray along with instructions for use and a resource card containing contact information for those wishing to pursue treatment for substance use disorder.

Skagit County EMS maintains a centralized reporting system to track the distribution of Naloxone Leave Behind kits as well as to notify Skagit County Public Health of any EMS contact with a known or suspected opioid overdose in accordance with Skagit County Ordinance #O20190001 requiring the reporting of health care incidents caused by an opioid overdose.

Washington State has several laws in place that protect those who intervene in an opioid overdose situation:

RCW 4.24.300 Immunity from liability for certain types of medical care (general public)

RCW 69.41.095 "Naloxone Law" – distribution, possession, and administration of naloxone among laypersons, first responder/law enforcement immunity

RCW 69.50.315 "Good Samaritan Overdose Law" – immunity from drug possession prosecution in drug-related overdoses.



EMS NALOXONE LEAVE BEHIND PROGRAM		
YEAR	MONTH	KITS DISTRIBUTED
2024	JANUARY	10
	FEBRUARY	5
	MARCH	8
	APRIL	8
	MAY	12
	JUNE	7
	JULY	10
	AUGUST	8
	SEPTEMBER	12
	OCTOBER	10
	NOVEMBER	9
	DECEMBER	6

EMS & TRAUMA CARE COUNCIL ADVISORY BOARD

The Skagit County EMS & Trauma Care Council Advisory Board was created by Skagit County Resolution number R20190037 in order to form a Local Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Care Council as authorized in accordance with WAC 246-976-970 and RCW 70.168.120

The Advisory Board consists of volunteer representatives as designated in Skagit County Resolution number R20190037, from public and private agencies licensed in the County responsible for the delivery of emergency medical services and/or are consumers of emergency medical services in Skagit County.

The purpose of the Advisory Board is to serve as a Local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Trauma Care Council advisory board to Skagit County Board of County Commissioners (SCBOCC), to disperse information from the North Region EMS and Trauma Care Council (NREMSTCC) and the State Department of Health, Office of EMS and Trauma Care Systems (DOH) to local providers, pursuant to WAC 246-976-970.

We recognize and appreciate the participation of the following advisory board members who served in 2024:

Name	Representation	Title/Organization
Margie Campbell	Local Hospital	Director, Emergency Department & Trauma Service, Island Health
Paul Ross	Local Hospital	Trauma Program Manager, Skagit Regional Health
Wood Weiss	BLS Transport Provider	Chief, Skagit County Fire District #13
Glen Gardner	ALS Transport Provider	Assistant Chief, Sedro-Woolley Fire Department
Dan Laine	ALS Transport Provider	Division Chief, Burlington Fire Department
Lance Ford	Rural Fire Responder Agency	Fire Commissioner, Skagit County Fire District #8
Matthew Russell, M.D.	EMS Medical Program Director	Medical Program Director, Skagit County EMS
Josh Pelonio	EMS Director	Director, Skagit County EMS
Dwight Worden	Consumer	Supervisor, Cascade Ambulance
[Vacant]	Elected Official - City Pop. > 7,500	[Vacant]
Eddie Hills	Elected Official - Town Pop. <7,500	Mayor, Town of Lyman
Peter Browning	Elected Official - County Commissioner	Commissioner, Skagit County District #2
Jennifer Sass-Walton	Prevention Specialist	Skagit County Public Health
Julia Johnson	Skagit 911 Board Chair	Mayor, City of Sedro-Woolley
Val Lockrem	Law Enforcement	Lieutenant, Swinomish Police Department



The Skagit County EMS System is a proud partnership serving the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley, the Towns of Concrete, Hamilton, La Conner, and Lyman, and the unincorporated areas of Skagit County.



Skagit County Emergency Medical Services
2911 E College Way, Suite C
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Phone: 360-416-1830
Email: emedservices@co.skagit.wa.us