

Mason County Fire District #17 Levy Lid Lift Information

What is the District 17 measure on my November Primary Election Ballot?

Mason County Fire District 17 is placing a levy lid lift proposition on the November 7, 2023 primary election ballot. This proposition raises the District's current property tax levy rate for Fire and Emergency operations and maintenance from \$0.37 to \$0.75 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The last time the levy was \$0.75 per \$1,000 was in 2004.

What was the levy passed last year?

In 2022, voters approved renewal, for 6 years, of the District's **Emergency Medical Services** levy. The EMS levy funds training, supplies and medical equipment used by EMS personnel. EMS funds do NOT pay for Fire or other responses.

Why is District 17 asking for a lid lift?

Mason County Fire District 17 pays for all its operations and capital needs through an operating levy for fire and emergency services. The District pays for medical responses through a separate EMS Levy. This means the District pays for apparatus, equipment, and all personnel through its operating budget. All personnel are volunteers. With the increase of tax collection capped at 1% of the previous years' tax collection, our tax collection rate steadily decreases. The tax collection rate has fallen from \$.75 in 2004, to \$0.37 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2023. This creates an imbalance in costs for services versus tax revenue for the District.

Have voters approved this before?

No. Since beginning service to our community in 1978, Fire District 17 has NEVER requested a levy lid lift. District 17 has been staffed by volunteers and supported by the community since opening its doors.

How much will the lid lift cost?

The owner of a property valued at \$200,000 currently pays approximately \$74.00 per year.

If the levy lid lift passes, the same property owner will pay approximately \$150 per year.

The owner of a property valued at \$350,000 currently pays approximately \$130.00 per year.

If the levy lid lift passes, the same property owner will pay approximately \$262.00 per year.

What does the lid lift pay for?

The fire levy pays for daily operations, such as equipment, apparatus, facilities, volunteer training and stipends, insurance, and repairs and maintenance. It supports volunteer firefighters who provide fire and emergency response 24 hours a day. Volunteers receive a stipend of \$10.00 per call.

District 17 will be able to budget to replace outdated/obsolete fire equipment & apparatus that have met or exceeded its service life; maintain our aging fleet of emergency response vehicles; maintain a sustainable funding source to ensure emergency response for our neighbors; adjust our budget for inflation experienced since 2004.

Can the Fire Levy ever go above \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation?

No. By state law, the fire levy cannot exceed \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

Does the fire district get more taxes because of increasing property value?

No. As property values increase, the levy rate decreases. The Fire district is limited to a 1% tax increase per year by state law regardless of how much property values increase. This levy lid lift is a single year restoration back to \$0.75 per thousand of assessed valuation and 1% limit for the subsequent years of the levy. In other words, the district can only collect a maximum of 1% above the previous year's collection rate regardless of how much your home increases in value.

How/When may I ask questions or share my thoughts?

Attend a Commissioners Meeting on the first Tuesday of each month 6:30 PM. Meetings take place at Station 17-1, 34571 N US Highway 101, Lilliwaup.