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Press Release

11/29/2023

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## **Getting to know EMS services in Klickitat County**

Klickitat County EMS District #1 or KCEMS1 is your ambulance service in Klickitat County. We are represented by the International Association of Fire Fighters or IAFF, local 5172. Here in Klickitat County, we have 18 full time employees when fully staffed and several part-time paramedics and EMTs. We operate 3 ambulances throughout the county 24 hrs per day, 365 days a year. We also have a 4th ambulance that is currently being staffed when possible and utilized to fill in when needed. We serve a population of approximately 23,000 residents with a seasonal surge in the spring and summer months, and approximately 1,900 square miles excluding Bickleton and Alderdale. We have an administrative board which consists of five Directors, who volunteer their time, and a full-time, paid Chief of Operations and finance administrator.

Historically, up until 2014, the two county hospitals managed and operated the ambulance services in Klickitat County. Due to the high cost and challenges of running and maintaining an ambulance service, the hospitals decided to have the county take over this responsibility. In 2014 our EMS district was formed by the County Commissioners and funded by the voters of Klickitat County. KCEMS1, now a separate agency, independent of the two hospitals, provides EMS services to the citizens and visitors of Klickitat County.

KCEMS1 is the primary provider of Advanced Life Support ambulance services in Klickitat County. We work closely with the volunteer fire departments, air ambulance services, search and rescue volunteers and law enforcement agencies when responding to medical emergencies and we provide rehabilitation services to firefighters at active house fires. We provide transfer services (Inter-facility transfers) for patients from our local hospitals to hospitals that provide a higher level of care. When possible we attend school sporting events, rodeos, and other community events needing ambulance coverage. In addition, KCEMS1 provides ongoing training to the county's local EMS volunteers and offers CPR classes.

There are three EMS stations, located in Goldendale, Dallesport and White Salmon. Each station covers a set area of the district. However, when one ambulance responds to a call, or takes an Inter-facility transfer, the other ambulances may move their location to best serve the district as a whole. You will often see us posting for coverage at the SR97 and SR14 junction, in Lyle, at the Avery view point, or other locations that provide the best response times to emergencies. We also have partnerships with agencies in Hood River County, Skamania County and Wasco County for additional Advanced Life Support services.

We are grateful for the tremendous community support we have received over all these years of transition and look forward to serving in the years to come.