

# Seattle Fire Department

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[www.seattle.gov/fire](http://www.seattle.gov/fire)

## Department Overview

The Seattle Fire Department (SFD) provides fire protection and prevention, technical rescue, and emergency medical services for the City of Seattle. It deploys engine companies, ladder companies, aid and medic units and fireboats to mitigate the loss of life and property resulting from fires, medical emergencies, and other disasters. SFD maintains 33 fire stations that are strategically located within six battalions to provide optimal response times to emergencies. Each battalion serves specific geographic areas in the city: the downtown/Central Area, north and northeast Seattle, northwest Seattle, south and southeast Seattle and West Seattle.

SFD has a strong record on prevention of fires. Seattle has fewer fires than the national average and of other cities with similar population size. Seattle averages 1.7 fires annually per 1,000 residents, which is lower than the national average of 4.1. Over the past five years, the average number of total structure fires per year in Seattle has been 901. Total fire dollar loss averaged \$20.6 million per year.

SFD provides emergency medical responses, which account for approximately 74% of all fire emergency calls in Seattle. To respond to the emergency medical demand, all Seattle firefighters are trained as emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to provide basic emergency medical care, or basic life support. SFD staffs eight medic units each with two firefighter-trained paramedics to provide more advanced medical care or advanced life support. Additionally, the department has five full-time and two peak-time aid units staffed by firefighters to provide basic life support citywide.

In 2016, SFD implemented the Low Acuity Alarm Program to reduce non-emergency calls to the 911 system and to provide improved service and care to individuals with non-emergent needs. In 2019, the program was renamed Mobile Integrated Health to better reflect its work, which now includes the Health One multidisciplinary response team of firefighters and case managers. Health One launched in 2019 to respond to individuals immediately in their moment of need and help them navigate the situation - whether they need medical care, mental health care, shelter, or other social services. Currently, core activities of Mobile Integrated Health are high utilizer intervention (individuals and locations), low acuity data and trend analysis, establishment of referral partnerships and alternate treatment/transportation development.

The department also has marine, hazardous materials, high-angle, tunnel and confined-space rescue teams. In addition, SFD officers and firefighters are members of local and national disaster response teams such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s Urban Search and Rescue Task Force and wild land firefighting. SFD's fire prevention efforts include fire code enforcement, building inspections, plan reviews of fire and life safety systems, public education and fire safety programs, regulation of hazardous materials storage and processes and regulation of places of public assembly and public events to ensure life safety.

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## Budget Snapshot

	2022 Actuals	2023 Adopted	2024 Endorsed	2024 Adopted
<b>Department Support</b>				
General Fund Support	282,236,725	271,287,290	278,507,292	282,575,015
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>282,236,725</b>	<b>271,287,290</b>	<b>278,507,292</b>	<b>282,575,015</b>
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>282,236,725</b>	<b>271,287,290</b>	<b>278,507,292</b>	<b>282,575,015</b>
 Full-Time Equivalents Total*	 1,178.35	 1,176.85	 1,177.35	 1,204.35

*\* FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here*

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## Incremental Budget Changes

### Seattle Fire Department

	2024 Budget	FTE
<b>Total 2024 Endorsed Budget</b>	<b>278,507,292</b>	<b>1177.35</b>
<b>Baseline</b>		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	2,398,564	-
<b>Proposed Operating</b>		
Adopt new SFD Fee and positions to maintain inspection turnaround time	300,000	2.00
Paramedic Training Captain	-	1.00
Recurring Grant Ordinance	792,679	-
Increase Overtime for additional EMS and Fire Guard Services required for special events	663,349	-
<b>Proposed Technical</b>		
Add Fire Fighter FTEs to support West Seattle operations	-	24.00
Revenue Adjustments	-	-
Prior Ordinance Position Technical Adjustment	-	1.00
Position reorganization to improve reporting structures	-	-
Removal of Sound Transit funded position	-	(1.00)
<b>Council</b>		
SCERS Contribution Rate Change	(86,869)	-
<b>Total Incremental Changes</b>	<b>\$4,067,723</b>	<b>27.00</b>
<b>Total 2024 Adopted Budget</b>	<b>\$282,575,015</b>	<b>1204.35</b>

## Description of Incremental Budget Changes

### Baseline

#### Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$2,398,564

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline budget phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including rates from the Department of Finance & Administrative Services, Seattle Information Technology Department, Seattle Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare, retirement, and industrial insurance charges for the department. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

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## Adopted Operating

### **Adopt new SFD Fee and positions to maintain inspection turnaround time**

Expenditures	\$300,000
Revenues	\$300,000
Position Allocation	2.00

This item creates a new fee to support SFD's construction-related goal of maintaining timely response and inspection services. In the building permit process, SFD is responsible for permits ranging from phased construction permits to fire alarm permits. In 2020, SFD was identified as causing increased turnaround times in the City's permitting process due to staffing issues. Since then, SFD has decreased the time for processing permits.

This proposal adds \$300,000 in new revenue to support additional staff to maintain this progress. The fee is set to support a management systems analyst, which will sunset in 2026, to set up business processes and focus on improving SFD's use of Accela, the City's construction permitting software. This body of work will result in efficiencies and end duplicative work within the division. In addition, this item includes 1.0 FTE construction inspector to support the department's response to inspection requests in the field. The new fee and increased staffing will result in maintaining inspection turnaround time.

### **Paramedic Training Captain**

Position Allocation	1.00
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This proposal adds 1.0 FTE Fire Captain Paramedic position to the Battalion 3 Medic One program to support the University of Washington Paramedic Training Program. An emergency position was approved in September 2023 and will expire at the end of 2023, and this action will make that position ongoing. The Medic One Foundation will fully fund the costs associated with the position.

### **Recurring Grant Ordinance**

Expenditures	\$792,679
Revenues	\$792,679

This item reflects grants pending or preliminary awards that will finalize in 2023, which will reimburse the department for expenses beginning in early 2024. A UASI grant provides funding for equipment procurement and training, includes items like structural collapse cutting/breaching equipment and lifting/shoring equipment to support missions within the UASI region. Approximately 48 UASI First Responders will be trained in structural collapse and heavy rescue.

### **Increase Overtime for additional EMS and Fire Guard Services required for special events**

Expenditures	\$663,349
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This item increases overtime budget in 2024 to account for increased EMS and Fire Guard Services required for special events. The amount of special event activity has increased Citywide and requires more emergency medical and fire guard services. These services are reimbursed by the venue/event promoter and this item corresponds with projected revenue increase.

## Adopted Technical

### **Add Fire Fighter FTEs to support West Seattle operations**

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Position Allocation 24.00

This item adds permanent positions to support West Seattle operations. During the closure of the West Seattle Bridge in 2020, funding was added to support additional operations in West Seattle on a temporary basis. During the 2023-2024 Budget process, the City Council added overtime funding to continue these operations after the bridge was reopened. The additional 24 FTEs are needed to make these temporary services permanent at Fire Station 26 and 37. This will allow the Fire Department to increase base staffing to support ongoing operations. Additional funding will be needed in 2025 to purchase a new Ladder truck and provide for recruit training for this higher level of overall staffing.

## Revenue Adjustments

Revenues \$924,609

These are adjustments to base revenues that are not tied to policy or proposed budget decisions. These adjustments are driven by changes in economic and service demand conditions.

## Prior Ordinance Position Technical Adjustment

Position Allocation 1.00

An administrative position added in Ordinance 126706 will now be reflected in the ongoing base budget.

## Position reorganization to improve reporting structures

Expenditures -  
Position Allocation -

This technical adjustment results in a net neutral change to match operational needs by transferring administrative positions between divisions. This change clarifies reporting structures and roles, which should result in administrative duties being accomplished more effectively.

## Removal of Sound Transit funded position

Position Allocation (1.00)

This item will remove 1.0 FTE Fire Capt-80 position authorized by Ordinance 126257 in 2020 to coordinate tunnel rescue training and funded by Sound Transit. Effective June 7, 2023, this work was concluded, and this position is no longer required.

## Council

### SCERS Contribution Rate Change

Expenditures \$(86,869)

The City's employee retirement system, the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS), of which most non-uniformed City employees are members, is a defined benefit pension program funded by a combination of salary-based employer (i.e., the City) and employee contributions, and investment earnings.

The employer portion of the SCERS contribution is funded through the annual budget process as a percentage of salaries based on several factors including reports from the contracted actuary and the City's long-range financial forecasts. The Mayor's 2024 Proposed Mid-Biennial Budget included an employer contribution rate of 16.22%, which was determined prior to the actuary's recommendation but provided for long-term "smoothing" given the City's long-term financial challenges.

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This item reduces the employer contribution rate from the proposed rate of 16.22% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 15.17%, which was determined to provide sufficient funding to the retirement system to achieve 100% funded status by 2042.

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## 2023-24 Mid-Biennium Adopted Budget Updates - Expenses

Budget Summary Level	Fund	Budget Process Phase Endorsed	Adopted Changes	Grand Total
Fire Prevention	00100 - General Fund	11,852,802	487,072	12,339,874
<b>Fire Prevention Total</b>		<b>11,852,802</b>	<b>487,072</b>	<b>12,339,874</b>
Leadership and Administration	00100 - General Fund	48,571,103	1,464,305	50,035,409
<b>Leadership and Administration Total</b>		<b>48,571,103</b>	<b>1,464,305</b>	<b>50,035,409</b>
Operations	00100 - General Fund	218,083,387	2,116,346	220,199,733
<b>Operations Total</b>		<b>218,083,387</b>	<b>2,116,346</b>	<b>220,199,733</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>278,507,292</b>	<b>4,067,723</b>	<b>282,575,015</b>