

News From the Ellsburg Volunteer Fire Department 2017.01.04

Our January meeting took place on January 4, 2017 at 7pm at the Bass Lake Firehall. Elections were held. The officers for 2017 are President Ray Privett, Vice-President Joe Keough, Secretary Heidi Yokel, Treasurer Sharron McKechnie, Safety Officer Bill McKechnie, Chief Jeff Dulinski, Assistant Chief Larry Fralich, and 2nd Assistant Chief Justus Peterson. Congratulations to the new officers and thank-you for giving of your time to our department! We have an active department that responds to calls, attends training opportunities, and constantly strives to keep our equipment functioning, supplies updated, and fire halls clean. We are always looking for new members. Please consider joining our department. Your township needs you! Our next meeting is February 1, at 7pm, at the Bass Lake Firehall.

We responded to 3 calls in December, and 3 calls as of this writing in January. Half of these calls were for rollovers on Highway 53 around mile marker 43. Please be careful around this curve. Slow down, pay attention to other vehicles, and be careful of the black ice that tends to form in this area. If you do succumb to the ditch, turn off your engine, call 911, and wait in your car for help if it is safe. That ditch is deep and water filled. On one of our calls there, another car also slid and hit the first vehicle already in the ditch. Stay in your car for safety. Our fire engine makes a good shield when positioned on the highway.

Our township received a fair amount of snow recently with plenty of wind to stir the snow up. That means that our residents are out doing a lot of snow shoveling. Statistics reveal that, on average in the USA, 100 people will die and 11,000 will go to the hospital every year because of shoveling snow. The act of shoveling snow will raise your blood pressure and heart rate to a higher level than if you were using a treadmill. Working with the arms requires more energy than leg work. Straining to lift a heavy load of snow, if you do not lift weights regularly, can cause a surge in your blood pressure and heart rate. Most people hold their breath when lifting and tossing the snow. Holding your breath while straining slams your diaphragm against your heart, which decreases circulation to the heart and causes it to slow down. The cold air that you breathe while shoveling can cause the arteries to spasm which can lead to a decreased blood supply to the heart. People with clear, unclogged arteries have been known to suffer heart attacks resulting from spasms caused by inhaling cold air. The most common time for shoveling snow is 6am -10am. This coincides with our natural circadian rhythms which make us more vulnerable to heart attacks anyway during that time frame.

So does that mean that no one should shovel snow? People who are over age 55, smoke, are overweight, sedentary, or have heart or lung disease are advised not to shovel. You can use a snowblower, but heart attacks have occurred because of this also. The main thing is to be conscious of your breathing. Do not hold your breath and strain. Cover your mouth with a scarf to warm the air that enters your lungs. Push rather than lift the snow. Dress in layers. Take breaks regularly indoors and rehydrate. Don't eat, drink alcohol, or smoke before shoveling. Stop shoveling if you experience chest discomfort, shortness of breath, dizziness, heart palpitations, or pain or numbness in your arms, back, neck, jaw, stomach or legs. Rest indoors. If symptoms persist after 5 minutes of rest, call 911.

Heidi Yokel
Secretary, EVFD