



Fact Sheet: Mayor's 2017-2018 Budget Proposal Fire Department

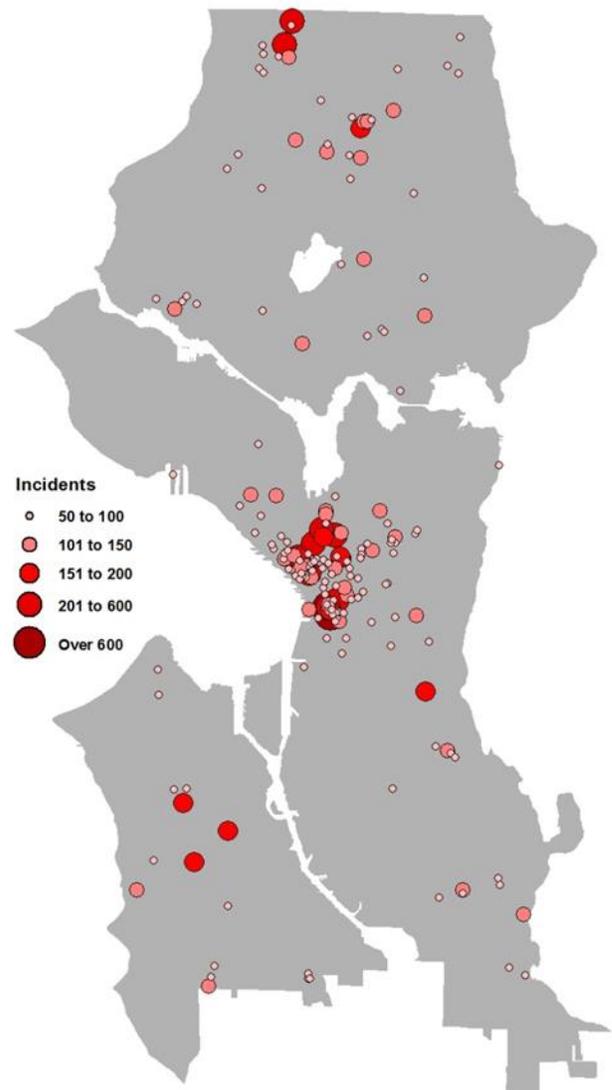
The Mayor's 2017-2018 Proposed Budget includes proposals that help support the Seattle Fire Department efforts to provide better service delivery and enhance firefighter safety. The following are some highlights of new programs and initiatives for the Fire Department in the 2017-2018 proposed budget.

Integrative Healthcare Collaborative:

The Mayor's proposed budget maintains support for the innovative Low Acuity Alarm program, which assists very high utilizers of the 911 system for non-life threatening reasons by providing outreach to understand their health care needs. The program was originally funded in the 2016 Adopted Budget and implemented mid-year in 2016 with a goal of reducing non-emergency calls to the 911 system.

The Seattle Fire Department responded to 94,346 calls in 2015. Of those calls, 24,792, or about 27%, are estimated to be "low acuity" calls, or a call for service that is found to present no immediate risk to health, life, property, or the environment. This category of calls includes hundreds of individuals who called 911 over 5 times each and many exceeding 25 requests for services in a year. Examples of low acuity calls include things like "no patient," "patient fall," and "dizziness."

In 2017, SFD will continue the Low Acuity Alarm program, which includes a program manager, a case worker, and new technology to better track patient interactions. The program will offer training modules on 911 use for residential facilities, establish partnerships that allow responding firefighters access to a Mobile Crisis Team from the Downtown Emergency Services Center (DESC) Crisis Solutions Center for patients having behavioral emergencies, and establish a pilot telephone nurse line for high utilizing clients to call for medical advice. Reducing the growth of non-emergency calls will allow SFD resources to be more available to deploy quickly to critical, life threatening calls.



The graphic to the right shows hot spots throughout the city where SFD has reported more than 50 times in a year. There are 193 locations that have received more than 50 responses; 60 locations that have received more than 100 responses; and 22 locations that have received more than 150 responses.

Building Inspections:

The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget includes \$825,000 to fund investments in the Fire Marshal's Office (FMO), which provides fire prevention services to help deliver the standard of life safety expected by those who work, live, and visit Seattle.

- **Improve Fire Safety in Complex High Rises:** High rise buildings present a particular fire risk in large cities as large concentrations of people are present in structures that rise far above the reach of aerial ladders. The proposed budget includes a new, fee-based, High Rise Inspection pilot program, similar to programs already in place in several other jurisdictions. The budget adds funding for two new Firefighter-Inspector positions to support field inspections. The inspectors will concentrate on fire and life safety inspections in complex high rise and hospital buildings. The program is intended to improve high-rise building fire code safety and compliance by implementing a high quality, consistent inspection protocol provided by specialty trained inspectors. Having dedicated firefighters for this program will help relieve the inspection burden on SFD companies, and improve availability and response times for emergency response units. This program will be offset by new fee revenue.
- **Provide Oversight of Fire Protections System Testing:** Fire protection systems such as alarms and sprinklers are among the most important components in any building with regards to preserving lives, protecting property, and providing safety to first responders. The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget creates a new program to provide oversight of fire protection systems testing. The Seattle Fire Department will contract with a private sector company who will manage customer notifications and reminders of annual fire system testing requirements and will refer compliance follow up to the Fire Marshal's Office for resolution. The proposed budget adds a new Fire Lieutenant Prevention Inspector position follow up on failed fire protection systems tests. By tracking and driving code compliance, this new program is intended to reduce false alarm activity and provide safer communities. The investment will be offset by new fee revenue related to the testing services.
- **Construction Inspections:** In 2015, the FMO inspectors completed 9,298 inspections, including hazardous materials, permit issuance, new construction, compliance, and special event inspections. Through the second quarter of 2016, the FMO has seen a 10% increase in inspections. SFD still has a high construction inspection workload and is not currently reaching target turnaround times of about 48 hours. To manage the increased inspection workload, the City will retain two inspector positions that were intended to be eliminated at the end of 2016.

Add Capacity to Improve Response Times

Call volumes for SFD in the Downtown and South Lake Union areas continue to be very high, particularly during daytime hours when the population of downtown almost doubles. The 2017-2018 Proposed Budget adds a peak staffing aid unit which will be purchased in 2017 and staffed for 12 hours a day beginning in 2018. The four existing aid units in the central core of the City averaged more than 6,500 calls each in 2015, which is well over the general threshold of 3,500 calls per year. The additional peak-time unit will mitigate the growing demands on existing resources. In particular, having another aid unit will lessen the number of times an engine company is dispatched to an EMS incident and thereby making it more available for fire and rescue emergencies. Also, redistributing the workload will provide better quality of care for the patients and improve the health and safety of fire personnel by lessening over-utilization of these resources.