

**WHATCOM COUNTY**  
Emergency Medical Services  
800 E Chestnut, Suite 3C  
Bellingham, WA 98225



**Mike Hilley**  
WCEMS Manger

## MEMORANDUM

To: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

From: Mike Hilley, EMS Manager July 11, 2024

**Subject:** 2024 to 2029 Interlocal Agreement for First Response Emergency Medical Services

City of Bellingham Fire Department  
City of Lynden Fire Department  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 1  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 4  
Whatcom County Fire Protection District 7  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 8  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 11  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 14  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 16  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 17  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 18  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 19  
Whatcom Fire Protection District 21  
South Whatcom Fire Authority

### Background and Purpose

The county-wide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy and Ordinance (2023 to 2028) was passed in November 2022 that provides funding for EMS services in Whatcom County. This agreement is aligned with the Advanced Life Support Agreement for the length of the current EMS Levy and contains elements of the Whatcom County EMS Levy Plan and Ordinance that supports Basic Life Support (BLS) Operations in three areas.

1. Pays Prospect Dispatch Fees for all agencies. Approximately \$2.4 mil per year. With annual inflation applied from the previous year CPI-W rates.
2. Funds and maintains Centralized EMS Electronic Patient Care Records System. (Image Trend) Approximately \$272,500 per year. With annual established inflation rates of 5% in January of each year.
3. Provides for an annual allocation of \$1.5 mil to offset agency cost for BLS operations. This allocation is equitably distributed among the 15 departments/districts.

There has been significant discussion over the last several months regarding the BLS Allocation. This allocation is meant to offset costs as a reimbursement for departments/district BLS operations as per RCW 84.52.069 (5) for EMS eligible and qualified expenses. The agreed upon language is presented on page 3 of the proposed agreement. As required by the EMS levy ordinance, the EOB and EMS administration will report and update the county council on the health of the end fund balance which may require budget adjustments that maintains an end fund balance to meet the operational reserves policy.

The 2024 to 2029 Interlocal Agreements are presented to the county council for approval after months of work between Whatcom County EMS office and the Whatcom Fire Chiefs Association representing all of the Whatcom County Fire Departments/Districts.

Submitted by Mike Hilley, Whatcom County EMS Manager; [mhilley@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:mhilley@co.whatcom.wa.us) 360-927-1155