



Fireline

Dedicated to the Community We Serve

A Publication of King County Fire Protection District #40

Summer 2014

Renton Firefighters Deployed to SR-530 Slide

On the morning of Saturday, March 22, 2014, everything changed for the small rural communities of Darrington and Oso, nestled in the Stillaguamish Valley of Snohomish County.

At 10:37 a.m. a major landslide raced across the Stillaguamish River, disrupted favored local fishing grounds, crashed through a residential neighborhood, buried a long section of State Route 530, and forever changed the landscape of the valley.

People were going about their daily lives when the landslide ripped through the neighborhood of Steelhaven Lane, tearing homes from their foundations and shearing trees at their bases. The mudslide buried more than a square mile before the horrible mix of victims, their homes and belongings, along with mud, rocks, trees, vehicles, and other debris came to rest across the valley floor.

Within minutes the first 911 calls went out reporting a mudslide was covering a portion of State Route 530, just four miles west of Oso, Washington. As first responders arrived on scene, the enormity of the event quickly became apparent.

First responders arriving by vehicle along both sides of the buried section of State Route 530 were confronted by an impassable wall of mud, water, and debris. The first responders by air, Snohomish



photo by Kelley Balcomb-Bartok/City of Renton

An American flag flies at half-mast at the site of the SR 530 landslide in Snohomish County during the rescue-recovery efforts in April. During the early days of the rescue efforts the flag was not lit at night, so rescue crews would take it down every evening and raise it first thing every morning. Eventually, crews rigged up a lighting system and the flag remained flying throughout the duration of the operation.

County Helicopter Rescue Team—an “all-hazard” volunteer search and rescue team—arrived a short time later and came across a sight of unimaginable destruction.

Where a winding river and a forested neighborhood once stood, now lay before them a mud-covered wasteland of destroyed homes and flattened trees, an open wound across the forested green valley below.

As first responders are trained to do, they immediately set out to help any victims they could find in the tangled mass of mud and debris.

By nightfall hundreds of first responders began converging on the area from across the region, and in the days following hundreds more would heed the call to

assist with what now is referred to as the SR-530 landslide.

Eight people were rescued the day of the slide and taken to regional hospitals.

As the scope and scale of the disaster became apparent, a request for assistance was issued to the state’s Washington Task Force 1, a federally recognized emergency response team based out of Pierce County. The task force is made up of members of various emergency personnel from across the state with specialized training and diverse skills and

experience in responding to disasters (see page 7) who can deploy within six hours of a request.

Renton Firefighters Deployed

Four members of Renton’s Fire & Emergency Services Department who serve on the Washington Task Force 1, Lieutenant Will Aho, along with firefighters Brett Bigger, Jake Lazenby, and Ryan Simonds, were among those who were called on to help during the disaster.

Firefighters Bigger and Simonds have served on the Washington Task Force 1 Search and Rescue Team for 12 and nearly five years, respectively. Both firefighters were deployed in the very early days of the slide, along with a third of the entire task force, to Darrington, located on

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Fire District 40 Commissioners are elected officials who represent the concerns and interests of you, the citizens of the community. The Commissioners oversee finances, equipment, capital improvements, and general fire department operations.

The Commissioners meet at 5 p.m. once a month on the second Thursday of each month at Station 13, located at 18002 108th Ave SE.

The Commissioners are always interested in what you have to say, so please feel free to attend the meetings to learn more about what is going on in your fire department. There is an opportunity at the end of the meeting to ask questions or share your ideas and concerns. If you are unable to attend the meetings, feel free to e-mail or write to us.

Fire District 40 Commissioners:
Linda Sartnurak, Position #1
Charlotte Ryan, Position #2
Cheryl Nichelson, Position #3
Steve Parsons, Position #4/Chair
Ronnie Little, Position #5/Vice Chair

Fire District 40
18002 108 Ave SE
Renton, WA 98055
(425) 255-0931
firedistrict40@gmail.com
Visit fd40.com for
more information.

A Note From Chief Peterson

In this issue of The Fireline you hear firsthand from our firefighters who responded to the Oso landslide. This terrible event opened the eyes of our region to how fast a tragedy strikes and the lasting impact it leaves. As the warmer weather approaches we are drawn outside.

The beautiful surroundings we are blessed to call home provide us with many summer activities. These activities have a



certain amount of risk associated with them. From over exposure to the harmful rays of the sun to the higher risk pursuits around our water ways, being proactive and aware of the dangers is the difference between an enjoyable or tragic experience.

Many of you will be planning backyard barbeques as we prepare to celebrate the Fourth of July. Follow these simple grilling safety rules to reduce the risk of injury or property damage while you enjoy a fun time with your

friends and family:

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.

Early indicators show that we are in for a dry summer with temperatures above normal. The grass and brush throughout the area will be tinder dry and vulnerable to fire. Practicing good fire safety habits is the key to protecting your home and property.

On behalf of the members of your fire department we wish you a safe, enjoyable and memorable summer.

Sincerely,
Chief Mark Peterson
Fire District 40/Renton Fire Dept.
Emergency Services Administrator

Don't Be A Drowning Statistic

In the late spring and early summer, water in our rivers and streams is extremely cold and fast moving, which can make the waterways extremely dangerous for rafting, kayaking, and swimming.

As the weather warms up and more people visit our rivers and lakes, the Washington State Department of Health urges parents to talk to their kids about water safety.

Drowning often happens when people misjudge distance, current, or water temperature. Fatigue or hypothermia can set in rapidly, and it only takes a few minutes before a person can

be pulled underwater and lose consciousness, risking permanent brain damage or even death.

Young people are particularly susceptible to drowning since they may push boundaries to show their strength, endurance, or bravery, while not believing their actions could lead to injury or death.

The best way to help protect our youth from drowning is to be direct—tell them that teens, especially boys, never expect they'll be the one who ends up as a drowning statistic. Show them how to identify dangers and how they can make choices that avoid the risk.

Get To Know Your Firefighters: Mark Price

Lieutenant Mark Price

How long have you been in fire services and where did you begin your career?

I started my fire fighting experience while still in high school as a volunteer firefighter with Marion County Fire District #1 in Salem. I worked for Fire District 40 since 1988 until I started working for the City of Renton through the merger in 2008.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

My wife and I have been very active in our community, working as volunteers at the Maple Valley Food Bank and serving community meals twice a month in Black Diamond. We enjoy camping, fishing, skiing, softball and spending time with our family.



Education:

I attended Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon, where I received an associate degree in 1988; shortly after that I was hired by Fire District 40.

Where are you from originally?

I grew up just outside of Salem, Oregon. I graduated from Douglas McKay High School in 1982.

Spouse/Significant Other/ Children/Pets:

My wife (of 29 years) Yvette works for the King County Library System, and we have three children: Elya-anne (24), who graduated from CWU and teaches English in Vietnam, Annamarie (22), who is studying Aerospace Engineering in Prescott, AZ, and Ben (19), who is studying music at EWU.

Fireworks Rules: Play It Safe This Fourth of July

The Fourth of July is the busiest day of the year for firefighters throughout the region. Every year serious injuries occur and property is destroyed as a result of fireworks. We're asking for your help to make this a safer, less destructive Independence Day.

Firecrackers, bottle rockets and skyrockets are all illegal to possess and discharge.



Before You Light the Fuse, Consider the Consequences

No matter how cautious you are, you cannot control where aerial fireworks will land. That bottle rocket you set off in fun can have tragic results if it lands on your neighbor's wood deck or roof. In King County,

Attend Public Fireworks Display

Skip the trip to the fireworks stand and attend a public display instead. This is the safest way to enjoy fireworks.

Observe Bans and Restrictions

Fireworks are banned in many cities, including Renton. In unincorporated King County and District 40, fireworks can only be discharged on July 4 from 9 a.m. to midnight. Fireworks are not allowed in parks or on school property.

Don't Use or Tolerate Illegal Fireworks

On July 4, many people who are good citizens the rest of the year see no harm in breaking the law by setting off illegal fireworks. It's time for a change. Don't use illegal fireworks and don't tolerate the use of illegal fireworks by family members, friends or party-goers. Fireworks purchased on tribal lands, out of state or over the internet may be illegal.

fireworks have caused millions of dollars in damage and have displaced numerous households throughout the years. In nearly all cases, the fireworks were set off by someone other than the fire victims.

Fourth of July Fireworks Rules

In unincorporated King County:

- Fireworks may be discharged only on July 4 from 9 a.m. to midnight.
- Fireworks sales are legal beginning at noon on June 28 until 11 p.m. and then daily between the hours of 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. through July 4. No sales can occur after July 4.
- To purchase fireworks you must be at least 16 years of age with photo identification.

Water Safety Starts With You

Over 1,500 children and teens die every year in the U.S. from drowning. In Washington state, an average of 25 children and teens drown every year. Most of them are swimming, boating or just playing in or near water. Please follow these important tips on water safety and drowning prevention to fully enjoy your summer:

- Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards.
- Always swim with a buddy; do not allow anyone to swim alone. Even at a public pool or a life-guarded beach, use the buddy system!
- Ensure that everyone in the family learns to swim well. Enroll in age-appropriate Red Cross water orientation and Learn-to-Swim courses.

- Never leave a young child unattended near water and do not trust a child's life to another child; teach children to always ask permission to go near water.
- Have young children or inexperienced swimmers wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets around water, but do not rely on life jackets alone.
- Establish rules for your family and enforce them without fail. For example, set limits based on each person's ability, do not let anyone play around drains and suction fittings, and do not allow swimmers to hyperventilate before swimming under water or have breath-holding contests.
- Even if you do not plan on swimming, be cautious around natural bodies of water including ocean shoreline, rivers and lakes. Cold temperatures, currents and underwater hazards can make a fall into these bodies of water dangerous.
- If you go boating, wear a life jacket! Most boating fatalities occur from drowning.
- Avoid alcohol use. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance and coordination; affects swimming and diving skills; and reduces the body's ability to stay warm.

Life Jackets Float, You Don't!



Please remember:
A life jacket does not
take the place
of supervision!

When buying a life jacket, check for:

- Coast Guard approval label.
- A snug fit. With the life jacket on, raise your arms over your head. Look to the left and right; the chest part of the jacket shouldn't hit the chin.
- Head support for younger children. A well designed life jacket will support the child's head when the child is in the water.
- A strap between the legs for younger children will help prevent the life jacket from coming off.

Guidelines for wearing life jackets

Even if you or your child knows how to swim, children, teens and adults should always wear a life jacket:

- When on a boat, raft or inner tube.
- When swimming in open water like a lake or river.
- When playing in or near the water and on docks.
- When participating in water activities such as skiing, surfing, wind surfing, jet-skiing, etc.

BIG 5
SPORTING GOODS

& the Washington State Drowning Prevention Network

25% OFF
the Regular Price
of any Life Jacket
in Stock

Offer good: April 1, 2014
through September 30, 2014

Good at all Washington and North Idaho Big 5 Sporting Goods for one-time purchase on in stock life jackets only. Excludes bulk orders, Super Value Price Items, Jansport, and all rebate offers. Limit one coupon per customer. Cannot be applied to other coupons or prior purchases. Not redeemable for cash or cash equivalent and must be surrendered at time of purchase. Discounts on multi item purchases will be apportioned to each item on a pro rata basis. Go to www.big5sportinggoods.com for the location nearest you.



Ten Ways To Make Bicycling Safer

Bicycle riding is fun, healthy, and a great way to be independent. But it is important to remember that a bicycle is not a toy; it's a vehicle! Many bicycle-related crashes resulting in injury or death are associated with the bicyclist's behavior, including such things as not wearing a bicycle helmet, riding into a street without stopping, turning left or swerving into traffic that is coming from behind, running a stop sign, and riding the wrong way in traffic. Here are ten tips to help make bicycling a safer experience for everyone:



Protect Your Head

Wear a properly fitted helmet to protect your brain, save your life.



Stay Visible

Whether daytime, dawn, dusk, foul weather, or nighttime, you need to be seen by others. Wearing neon, fluorescent, or other bright colors, and reflective material increases your visibility.



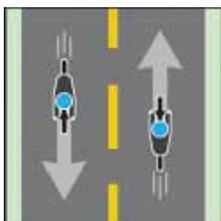
Look, Signal & Look Again

Use hand signals to let drivers and other bicyclists know where you're going. Look and make eye contact. Don't assume drivers will stop.



Stay Alert

Keep a lookout for obstacles in your path. Use your eyes AND ears. Watch out for anything that could make you lose control of your bike.



Go With the Flow

Ride on the right in the same direction as other vehicles. Go with the flow—not against it.



Be Predictable

Drivers are used to the patterns of other drivers. Don't weave in and out of traffic. The more predictably you ride, the safer you are. Check for traffic. Be aware of traffic around you at all times.



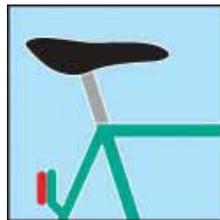
Don't get Distracted

Don't listen to music or talk on the phone while riding. You need your eyes and ears to see and hear traffic to avoid dangerous situations.



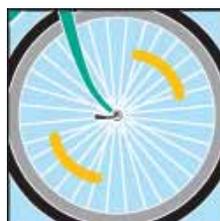
Obey All Traffic Laws and Traffic Lights

A bicycle is a vehicle and you're a driver. When you ride in the street, obey all traffic signs, signals, and lane markings.



Ensure Bicycle Readiness

Is your bicycle properly adjusted? Is your saddle in a comfortable position?



Do A Quick Bicycle Test

Check your brakes and your wheels. Make sure that "quick release" wheels are properly secured.

Do An "ABC Quick Check" Before Riding Your Bike

A Is For Air

Inflate tires to the pressure listed on the side of the tire. Use a pressure gauge to ensure proper pressure.

B Is For Brakes

Inspect pads for wear; replace if there is less than 1/4" of pad left. Check pad adjustment; make sure they do not rub the tire.

C Is For Cranks and Chain

Pull your cranks away from the bike—if they are loose, tighten the bolt. Check that your chain is free of rust and gunk.

Quick Is For Quick Releases

Make sure your quick releases are all closed. They should all be pointing to the back of the bike, so they don't get caught on anything.

Check Is For Check It Over

Take a quick ride to check that it is working properly.



photo by Kelley Balcomb-Bartok/City of Renton
Search and Rescue crews search through the SR 530 landslide “debris field” in search of the victims of the tragic landslide that struck the communities of Arlington, Oso, and Darrington on March 22, 2014.

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the east side of the slide. The firefighters reported to the base camp the task force established consisting of dirt floor tents at the fairgrounds where the small rural town holds their annual Bluegrass Festival.

Renton firefighter Bigger was deployed to Darrington as part of “Rotation 1” beginning Monday, April 24, for 22 days to serve as a Planning Section Chief at the command post in Darrington. Bigger helped collect GPS data from the site of the disaster, along with the creation of maps and other detailed information to support the rescue operations.

Firefighter Simonds, a HazMat specialist with Task Force 1, was reassigned to serve on Rescue Squad 4 during the 13 days of his deployment, working closely alongside local community members to assist with rescue operations. Simonds spent the first four days of his deployment searching and de-layering the debris field where four homes were located in the mid-area of the landslide.

Lieutenant Will Aho, a Renton firefighter and a 9-year member of Washington Task Force 1, serves as a Planning Section Chief with the task force. Aho began his deployment Thursday, April 3, serving alongside Bigger based out of Darrington.

Renton firefighter Jake Lazenby, a Heavy Rigger with Washington Task Force 1, was deployed as part of “Rotation 2” to Darrington, working closely with heavy equipment operators and search crews. As crews trained their focus on the southeastern portion of the slide, Lazenby worked closely with pontoon

operators in the flooded zones of the debris field.

“What stands out to me was the enormity of it (the slide),” said Aho. “Pictures don’t do it justice. It was so much bigger than expected. It was phenomenal to see the scope of it.” The landslide buried over a square mile of the valley floor, in some cases with as much as 75 to 80 feet of dirt, mud and debris. At the peak of the rescue effort over 600 people were on site to help find the victims. Aho went on to say “And the commitment, the work ethic of everybody there to help was amazing. People cared. There was an incredibly strong, positive attitude. This was our mission. We were there helping our neighbors, to do what we could to help. We needed to find closure for these people.”

Team Effort Key To Success

“From day one, the relationship (between agencies and locals) was what made it effective,” said Bigger. “It was a total team effort,” added Simonds, “Working with the locals, building relationships.

Friendships. We couldn’t have done it without them. Darrington is basically a logging community. Without their heavy equipment we couldn’t have achieved what we did. We asked them to park their trucks with the tanks out – we had fuel trucks coming in – so we could refuel their equipment.”

When Simonds arrived in Darrington there were only locals on the east side, and he said there was a lot apprehension about the government and FEMA. “But by day two or three we’d earned their trust and respect and friendship. This was instrumental in

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photo by Kelley Balcomb-Bartok/City of Renton
Search and Rescue crews worked alongside members of the local community effected by the landslide, developing a close-knit working relationship built on trust in the face of tragedy.

Continued from previous page

taking us forward. These are hard-core people, and even though they knew this was our job, they were impressed we just kept coming out. They didn't expect that from us, but we'd become like family with them."

Mapping & GPS Invaluable

Mapping played a critical role in recovery efforts. Rescue crews carried GPS (Global Positioning System) devices with them as they searched the debris field, and detailed locations of everything recovered during the day was carefully marked to be included in regularly updated maps generated every night. "Mapping was huge in this thing," said Aho. "GPS was invaluable. Data gathering helped us with trajectory mapping. Everything was GPS tagged, so we could track back to where victims were found."

During the day search crews marked locations of identifiable items, such as license plates, mail, anything that could be associated with individual victims.

At the end of every work cycle the data was downloaded by Incident Support Team members and put together. "We could see patterns," explained Bigger. "We would then hold meetings," added Aho, "with the Incident Management team, including the Task Force Leader, the Operations Chief, and all the team managers. Armed with the new information we could gauge our progress, and make plans and set goals for the next day."

Community Supported Rescue Workers

Search crews returning to Darrington every night from a long day



Renton Fire & Emergency Services members Will Aho, Brent Bigger, and Ryan Simonds serve on the Washington Task Force 1 Urban Search & Rescue Team, and were deployed to Darrington to assist during the SR 530 landslide rescue and recovery efforts. (Not pictured: Jake Lazenby).

working on the debris field were regularly met by members of the community offering their support. "We were there eating MREs (Meal, Ready-to-Eat) when the locals would show up to bring us lunches. They offered us showers, anything they could do to help us.

"Ladies were asking to take our laundry for us. Families lined up to each take a bag, and they would bring it back to us that next evening," said Simonds. "We would find letters from kids in our (laundry) bags."

I will forever be tied to that community," said Simonds. "I may have left on the fifth, but I haven't left. I truly hope the community survives."

Washington Task Force 1: A Brief History

Washington Task Force 1 (WA-TF1) was established in 1991 and currently has 36 different participating agencies from three primary jurisdictions: Seattle Fire, King County and Pierce County. The team was one of the first 12 task forces to be deemed deployable by FEMA, and currently maintains a 24-hour deployment readiness.



WA-TF1 has a unique composition that comprises over 210 team members, drawn from a variety of organizations including fire departments, hospitals, law enforcement and public works agencies in the City of Seattle, King County and Pierce County.

Since joining the National US&R System, WA-TF1 has committed its resources to the extrication of victims trapped by structural collapse as a result of earthquakes, hurricanes, acts of terrorism and other disasters and has provided Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) training for local responders throughout the Pacific Northwest.

WA-TF1's unique location in the Pacific Northwest, adjacent

to three major air facilities: (McCord Air Force Base, Boeing Field and Seattle International Airport) allows for expeditious deployment via commercial or military air carrier.

Pierce County Department of Emergency Management (PCDEM) is the sponsoring agency of the Washington Task Force and is responsible for the operation of Pierce County Rescue Systems, a premier technical rescue training program. The instructors are certified FEMA instructors from the task force and they include trained individuals from all over the Pacific Northwest, South America and Asia. In addition, WA-TF1 has enjoyed a close relationship with the Vancouver, British Columbia US&R Task Force. Numerous members of the Canadian Task Force attend training courses and exercises sponsored by the Washington Task Force.

The team currently has members proficient in a variety of foreign languages including Spanish, French, German, Russian, and African and Philippine dialects. WA-TF1 continually strives to maintain a reputation of a strong work ethic; a high degree of professionalism; a positive, can-do attitude; and an eagerness and willingness to tackle all assigned tasks.



King County Fire Protection District #40
18002 108th Ave SE
Renton, WA 98055

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Vessel Safety: Always Be Prepared

Our region is a boater's paradise with miles of shoreline, rivers, and lakes. However, it's important that boaters operate their vessels in a safe manner to protect themselves and others from needless accidents and injuries. By focusing on water safety, checking your gear and wearing life jackets when in unguarded swim and boating areas, paying attention to the weather, and checking your boat, equipment, boat balance, engine and fuel supply, you can avoid unnecessary risks.

Boating safely means having the right equipment on board for all emergencies, big and small. Below are a list of things you should always have on your boat:

- **Basic First Aid:** Maintain a first aid kit stocked with basic supplies (gauze, bandages, alcohol cleaning pads, aspirin, etc.).
- **Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs):** The U.S. Coast Guard and state law require you to have an approved PFD (also called life jackets and life vests) when you are in a boat, and that boat must carry one PFD for each passenger on board. Certain types of boats must also have a cushion or ring that can be thrown to a person in the water.
- **Signaling Devices:** Keep day and nighttime signaling devices on your boat including a sound maker, horn or whistle, distress flag, flares and/or a fog system.
- **Fire Extinguisher:** You must have a fire extinguisher with you while you're on the water. Hopefully you'll never need it, but it's an essential item to keep close at hand should a fire ignite in the engine, galley or on the grill.
- **Boat Anchor:** To keep from running aground in bad weather or as a result of engine failure, every boat needs an adequate anchor.
- **Tow Ropes & Dock Lines:** Make sure you have an extra tow rope in case you or another boater is stranded and needs a lift. Dock lines also come in handy when you need to tie up to someone's pier.
- **Marine VHF Radio & Cell Phone:** Keep a VHF radio on your boat at all times and bring your cell phone along too.

Vessel Operators Must Take Safety Education Course To Operate Boat

Washington State law requires operators of motorboats with 15 horsepower or greater to take a safety education course



and obtain a boater education card to operate a boat in Washington. The Washington Boater Education Card is proof that you have successfully completed an approved boating safety

course. Boaters can take an education course in a classroom, online, or at home. Vessel operators must carry the card on board the vessel and have it available for inspection by an enforcement officer.

To learn more about Washington Boater Education Cards visit www.boat-ed.com/washington/boating_card.html.

Free Monthly CPR Classes

Fire District 40 offers monthly free "Friends and Family" CPR classes at Station 13 (18002 108th Ave SE). The classes are held every third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. Pre-registration is required; call 425-430-7104.



Instruction includes CPR for adults, children, and infants. No first aid will be taught at this time, but an introduction to Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) awareness will be offered. Each class will last approximately two hours, with a minimum of eight students and no more than 25 students. Children under the age of 12 should not attend.

A card of completion will be issued at the end of the class. Please note that this class is not designed for healthcare providers.