

Greendale Fire Department: FAQs

Welcome to the Greendale Fire Department's frequently asked questions and answers section. We will update questions and answers to reflect the latest information. We hope you find them helpful and informative. Simply click on the question for more information.

Why does a fire engine respond to ambulance calls?

All Greendale Fire Department apparatus carry the same basic medical equipment and supplies. The only major difference is an ambulance can transport a patient to the hospital. Therefore, if an ambulance is not initially available or if a fire engine is closer to the call the fire engine will respond and provide the necessary care and treatment until an ambulance arrives.

Why are there sometimes two ambulances on the scene of an emergency call?

In Milwaukee County, fire departments function under a two-tier medical system. The two-tiers are Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS). Based on the information received from the caller the appropriate level of medical service is dispatched.

Basic life support:

- o Basic life support ambulances are staffed with Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's).
 - EMT's receive approximately 120 hours of initial training.
 - EMT's are required to complete a refresher course every two years.
 - If a call is basic life support in nature, a Greendale ambulance is sent. If, once on scene the patients condition, complaints, or vital signs the EMT's can upgrade the call to advanced life support and a paramedic unit is then dispatched.

Skills EMT can deliver include:

- o Splinting.
 - Wound care and dressing.
 - Automatic external defibrillation.
 - Administration of aspirin if a heart attack is indicated.
 - Administration of albuterol for asthma with approval from medical control.
 - Administration of epinephrine if an allergic reaction is indicated.
 - Assist in the administration of patients medications.
 - Examples of basic life support calls include;
 - Trips, slips, falls, sprains.
 - Broken bones.
 - Minor trauma

Advanced Life Support:

- o If a call is advanced life support in nature, a Greendale ambulance is sent to provide initial care and an advanced life support unit from a neighboring community is sent. The Greenfield Fire Department is the primary provider of paramedics to Greendale. If Greendale Paramedics are unavailable then Franklin, South Milwaukee, and Oak Creek are subsequently requested.
 - Paramedics receive over 1000 hours of initial training.
 - Paramedics are required to complete continuing education every two years.
 - Paramedic can deliver care that is initially available in an emergency room and occasionally have to contact the base doctor per medical protocols.
 - Skill Paramedics can deliver include:
 - Starting Intravenous lines.

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- Manual cardiac defibrillation to convert arrhythmias.
- Administration of medications:
- Cardiac drugs
- Albuterol
- Medication to assist with pain treatment
- Dextrose for diabetic emergency's
- Benadryl for mild allergic reactions
- Epinephrine for severe allergic reactions

Examples of advanced life support calls include:

- o Heart attacks
 - Asthma attacks
 - Diabetic emergency's
 - Unconscious patients
 - Drug overdoses
 - Major trauma's

Are firepits or outdoor fireplaces allowed to be used in Greendale?

Below is an excerpt from Chapter 14-Fire Prevention of the Greendale municipal code the section is entitled "recreational burning. Below is a list of requirements necessary to comply with the ordinance.

(1) RECREATIONAL BURNING (Wood Burning Appliance) A recreational fire is defined as a fire to be used for cooking, or esthetics benefit similar to that of a campfire. The fire shall be confined to a commercially designed outdoor wood burning appliance.

(a) Requirements on size and location of recreational fires, and general requirements.

1. Fires shall be in an approved outdoor appliance less than or equal to 3 feet in diameter and less than or equal to 3 feet in height. These dimensions are for the burn chamber and do not include the chimney of the appliance, nor a stand designed for the appliance.
2. It is recommended that only fireplace units having the fire area protected by a screen or wire mesh be used as to hold down any flying embers.
3. Fires shall contain only wood or charcoal; any other building materials are prohibited.
4. The wind velocity may not exceed 10 mph.
5. Fires shall NOT be started or accelerated using flammable liquids, such as gasoline.
6. The fire must be a minimum of 10 feet from all structures, roadways, and lot lines.
7. The outdoor appliance shall not be used on any deck or wooden surface.
8. If smoke travels in such a manner that it obscures roadways, if the fire department receives complaints from the area, or it is deemed to be a hazard, the Fire Official reserves the right to require that the fire be extinguished.

Many communities have and continue to tackle the issue of allowing recreation burning. With the rise in popularity of outdoor firepits and chiminea's also comes a problem, ironically though the trouble is not over traditional fire prevention concerns, but due to the presence of smoke in residential neighborhoods. Therefore, the Greendale Fire Department is offering these additional recommendations to ensure the ability for residents to continue recreational burning and keep neighborhoods happy.

- o Limit the number of recreational fires. Don't burn every night, just on occasion.
- o Move the firepit to a location in the yard that complies with distance requirements but also does not allow smoke to immediately drift towards neighbors or structures.

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- o Extinguish fires instead of allowing them to burn out.
- o Have fires in the early evening and extinguish at typical bedtime.
- o Do not have fires when the air is heavy and smoke stays close to the ground.
- o Be aware of neighbor's windows being open.
- o Be a good neighbor.

The Greendale Fire Department is responsive to the needs of the community and hopes to continue the parameters of this ordinance. However, this is dependent on the voluntary compliance of residents balanced with the concerns others.

My fire alarm went off, but there is no emergency. What should I do?

Once the Greendale Fire Department is dispatched to a call they will respond. If an alarm was set off in error you should call the Greendale Dispatch Center at 414-423-2121 and give them your address and the reason why the alarm should be cancelled. The dispatcher will then contact the fire units and relay the information. If no emergency can be confirmed the fire units will downgrade their response to non-emergency (no lights or siren) and respond to verify and gather information.

What is a typical day for a firefighter?

Firefighters work a 24 hour shift. Greendale Firefighters work from 8am – 8am. At 8am firefighters report to roll call where they learn of new information regarding equipment, street closures, and any important happenings from the previous shift. Next, the officer in charge gives the firefighters their assignments for the day and discusses some of the tasks they will attempt to accomplish amongst answering calls. After roll call, the firefighters go and check their fire gear, breathing apparatus, and the rigs to make sure they are stocked, ready, and maintained for the day. After equipment checks firefighters clean the fire station, while one firefighter goes to the store. Since the firefighters are going to be at the station for 24 hours they need to prepare lunch and dinner. At roll call the firefighters each chip-in about \$7 to personally pay for the two meals they will eat together. The remainder of the morning is spent either doing training, fire inspections, or fire prevention. The firefighters usually stop to eat lunch around 12. After lunch its training, fire inspections, or fire prevention activities again. At around 430pm the firefighters work day is complete and they start to prepare for the evening meal. After dinner the firefighters may workout, watch TV, work on projects, but they must be immediately ready to answer a call. Depending on the firefighter they can call it a night and go to be at anytime, though once again they must be up and ready to respond throughout the night. The next morning, the on duty firefighters are replaced by the next shift and the whole cycle starts over.
