



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SETFA awarded \$25,000 state grant to reduce firefighter cancer risk
Funding supports diesel exhaust upgrades to improve health and safety

YELM, Wash. – S.E. Thurston Fire Authority (SETFA) has been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries’ Firefighter Injury and Illness Reduction (FIIRE) Program. The funding will help upgrade the diesel exhaust capture system in Station 21’s apparatus bay—part of the agency’s ongoing efforts to reduce occupational exposure to cancer-causing particulates.

Diesel exhaust during apparatus start-up and idling has been identified in SETFA’s Safety Improvement Plan as a key hazard. Without a proper capture system, fumes can accumulate in shared workspaces, increasing the risk of long-term health issues such as respiratory disease and cancer.

“This upgrade is a targeted action to improve the long-term health and safety of our personnel,” said Fire Chief Mark King. “It reflects our department’s commitment to reducing occupational cancer risks through practical and effective engineering controls.”

The improved system will feature track-mounted hoses, automatic nozzle connections, high-efficiency filtration units, and a dedicated exhaust fan. While the total project cost exceeds the grant award, the funding makes this essential safety improvement more attainable. All grant-funded components must be completed by June 30, 2026.

SETFA continues to prioritize proactive safety measures and responsible fiscal management. By actively pursuing grant opportunities, the agency reduces long-term costs for taxpayers while investing in firefighter wellness and emergency readiness.

Learn more about the FIIRE Program:

lni.wa.gov/safety-health/grants-committees-partnerships/FIIRE

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Southeast Thurston Fire Authority provides emergency response for fires and emergency medical service to 30,000 people over 120 square miles, including the cities of Yelm, Rainier and surrounding unincorporated areas. SETFA relies on full-time and volunteer emergency personnel to respond to more than 4,000 calls per year. Learn more at www.sethurstonfire.org.