



PRESS RELEASE

November 20, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 19TH WINDSTORM RESPONSE

On November 19th, 2024, the community of Sudden Valley, within South Whatcom Fire Authority (SWFA), experienced a significant windstorm event that extended into the early morning hours of November 20th. The event in Whatcom County appeared to be limited to the Sudden Valley area, with some lesser impacts in adjacent areas. We believe the windstorm produced unusually damaging winds due to an easterly wind direction that is not typical for our area, causing stress on trees that are normally exposed to more southerly and westerly wind patterns.

Our agency responded to 25 incidents from 7:00 PM on November 19th through 2:30 AM on November 20th. Three of those incidents were non-storm-related medical incidents, and the other 22 incidents were all storm related. We responded to multiple propane and natural gas leaks, multiple trees down on cars and buildings, and three incidents requiring assistance to extricate persons from buildings that were trapped. For context, our agency normally responds to an average of 25 incidents over a week's time period.

Most importantly, we are happy to report there were no reported injuries or fatalities reported during this incident.

We are extremely proud of our firefighters, along with our partner agencies at Bellingham Fire Department, Whatcom County Sheriff's Office, and Whatcom County Public Works for their actions to preserve life and property during this significant storm event.

We know that there are many more homes, vehicles, and other property that were damaged in this storm than were reported to us. We continue to stress that residents stay vigilant of the hazards produced by this storm and report any life-threatening situations to 911. We urge residents to use vetted contractors for tree removal, home repairs, electrical work, and other repair trades to avoid injury or further damage.

We do not have any information related to power outages or restoration times, and we are not able to provide clean-up or tree removal services. Non-emergent questions can be asked via email at info@swrfa.org, or by calling our administrative phone number during business hours (360) 676-8080. Any concern for emergencies should be immediately directed to 911 for a proper response.

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