

# Kirkwood Fire/EMS Prop One Sales Tax: Why Now?



**What is Proposition 1?** Proposition 1 is a quarter-of-a-cent sales tax that would be used for the sole purpose of providing revenue for the Kirkwood Fire Department to fund and maintain current service levels.

**What will it do?** The proposed quarter-of-a-cent Fire/EMS sales tax will create a dedicated funding source to support Fire and Emergency Medical Services in Kirkwood. Passage of the tax will allow us to add a level of service to the Fire Department by adding seven new firefighter/paramedics. Currently, the City has two ambulances that are fully staffed. With passage of the proposed Fire/EMS sales tax, the City can add the personnel required to fully staff three ambulances at all times.

Due to increases in emergency medical calls, **total call volume** has steadily increased. Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls for medical emergencies have increased by 45 percent since 2007. There were 1,879 EMS calls that year and 2,732 EMS calls in 2014 (see graph, top of next page). Adding staff will allow us to better respond to these calls in a timely manner and maintain the high level of service Kirkwood citizens expect.

The trend is clear. The demand for service continues to increase and yet staffing for Fire and EMS units has barely increased to keep pace with the demand. Fire Department call volume has increased 136 percent since 1990, while the increase in personnel to respond to these emergencies has increased by less than 10 percent. A third ambulance, fully staffed, is necessary to meet this demand. Every Kirkwood neighborhood deserves to have an ambulance in their Fire House. The hiring of seven firefighter/paramedics is the only way to put a third ambulance into service around the clock and provide the required rapid emergency response.

**What do other cities do?** This particular sales tax can only be used by cities with municipal fire departments. In St. Louis County, there are 17 such cities. To date, Kirkwood, Glendale, and Ladue are the only cities that have not yet enacted this funding measure. Cities whose Fire Departments benefit from this tax are: Berkeley, Brentwood, Clayton, Crestwood, Des Peres, Ferguson, Frontenac, Hazelwood, Maplewood, Olivette, Richmond Heights, Rock Hill, University City, and Webster Groves.

**How does Kirkwood's current sales tax compare with those of other area cities?** Kirkwood's current sales tax is lower than neighboring cities such as Des Peres, Webster, Rock Hill, Brentwood, and Richmond Heights. If Prop 1 passes, our sale tax rate would be the same as those cities: 8.6125 percent.

**How much funding will Prop 1 generate if it passes?** Proposition 1 if passed will generate approximately \$1.1 million in new revenue annually for Kirkwood.



**Training is important:** Firefighter/Paramedic Tim House is the rescuer in the ice rescue training scenario above, conducted on Walker Lake in Kirkwood Park. Captain Charlie Dahm acted as the victim in the water.

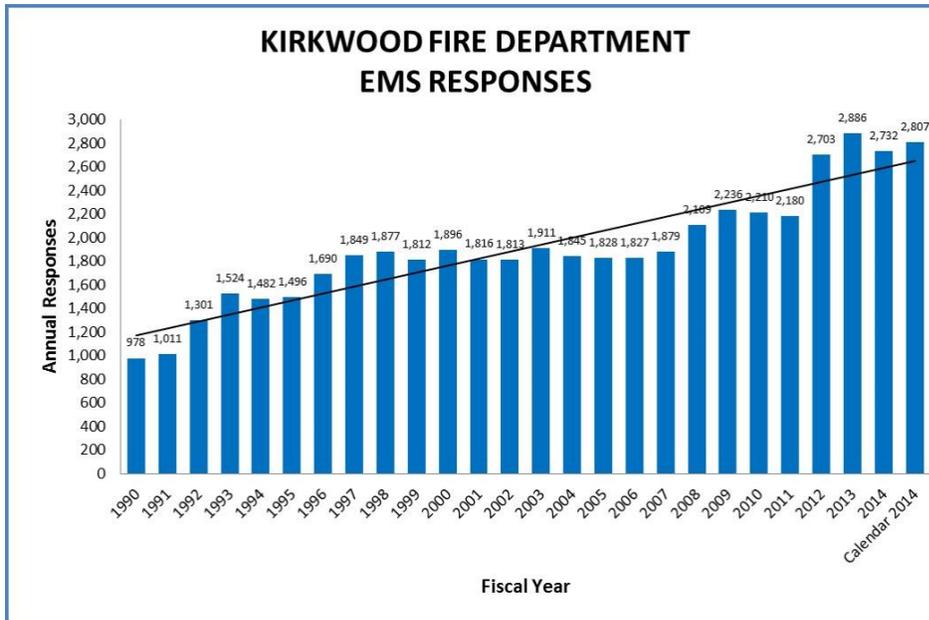
**What will Proposition 1 look like on my ballot?** Proposition 1 will appear on the ballot as follows:

Shall the City of Kirkwood impose a sales tax of one quarter of one percent for the purpose of providing revenues for the operation of the Kirkwood Fire Department?

YES

NO

# Kirkwood Fire/EMS Sales Tax: What else do I need to know?



**Are there alternatives that could help to fund the hiring of additional firefighter/paramedics?** The City has a property tax that could be increased by a few cents, but it would produce about one-third or less in revenue than the proposed quarter-of-a-cent Fire/EMS sales tax. The City's property tax, which is for operational expenses, was authorized by the voters to be set by Council each year, to a maximum of 34 cents. However, it has never been set higher than 29.5 cents by Council. A property tax puts the entire burden on residents and business owners, while a sales tax would be paid not only by Kirkwood residents but also by the people who come here to shop and dine.

**How would Prop 1 affect our overall sales tax rate?** The total sales tax rate is comprised of the City's sales tax, which currently is **2.25 percent** and has gone unchanged for many years; a 0.50 percent Capital Improvement Sales Tax (the State of Missouri collects this and distributes 85 percent of it back to Kirkwood); the State's sales tax (4.225 percent); and various County and area-wide special sales taxes that fund transportation, regional parks and trails, children's services, and emergency communications. Therefore, Kirkwood's **current overall sales tax rate is 8.3625 percent**. If the Fire/EMS sales tax increase is approved by voters, Kirkwood's sales tax would be 8.6125 percent.

**How does that translate into real expenses?** A \$4.99 bottle of laundry detergent, for example, would cost an additional 2 cents, meaning its total cost would go from \$5.40 to \$5.42. A \$99.00 Blu-Ray DVD player would cost an additional 25 cents, increasing the cost from \$107.27 to \$107.52.

**What is the Fire Department's current budget?**  
For Fiscal Year 2014, the Fire Department's budget is \$5,186,808.



### How can I register to vote?

To vote in the April 7 election, your registration application must be received in person or postmarked by March 11, the 4th Wednesday prior to Election Day. For full voting information, please call 314-615-1800, or visit the County Board of Elections Website at:

[www.stlouisco.com/yourgovernment/voterregistration](http://www.stlouisco.com/yourgovernment/voterregistration)

For additional information about the proposed Fire/EMS Sales Tax, please visit the City Website at [www.kirkwoodmo.org](http://www.kirkwoodmo.org) and read the full