

WOOD COUNTY FIRE SERVICE BOARD

P.O. BOX 1985, PARKERSBURG, WV 26101 * 304-424-1991

FIRE FEE

The Wood County Fire Fee Ordinance was enacted by the Wood County Commission in May of 2016. The fee was created to ensure a permanent reliable funding source for the 10 Volunteer Fire Departments in Wood County. The Fire Fee is imposed on all structures in Wood County outside of the city limits of Parkersburg. (Parkersburg already has their own fire fee.) Your Wood County fire fee is calculated by multiplying the square footage of your structure by the rate in the table below (no fee on land alone).

Rates are:

- Residential: .02 cents per square foot
-a \$5 charge is assessed for the first outbuilding larger than 100 square feet, with each additional outbuilding being charged \$1 for each structure thereafter.
- Homestead, Churches, tax exempt entities: .0125 cents per square foot
- Apartments Residential (3 or less apartments per parcel): .02 cents per square foot
- Apartments Commercial (4 or more apartments per parcel): .03 cents per square foot
- Commercial: .03 cents per square foot (\$3,000 fee maximum per structure)

Rest assured a robust system of checks and balances exists for all fire fee monies collected and spent.

The Wood County Fire Board works with the Assessor's office to mail out fire fee invoices each January. Monies received from fire fee bills are then collected by the Wood County Sheriff's tax office and deposited into the Wood County Fire Board account at the County Clerk's office. When a Fire Department needs fire board funds to pay a bill, the fire department submits the original signed invoice to the County Administrator's office requesting payment. The County Clerk then receives this request for payment, reviews the invoice, and then will pay the bill directly from that departments Fire Board account. At no time is any of the Fire Fee money given directly to any of the county Fire Department's or any other entity.

Additionally, please find information the Fire Board wanted to share with you as a result of questions received from the first mailing of fire fee invoices sent out this past fall:

- This fire fee ordinance was created following the guidelines setup by the West Virginia State Code. The code was enacted in 1984 by the State Legislature, but not adopted by Wood County until July 2016.
- This fire fee takes the place of your local VFD donation request letter. Many fire departments will still hold their own fundraisers (ice cream socials, candy sales, etc.). It is your choice to participate in those events to enjoy community comraderies and show your local fire department support.
- Fire fee's may be paid:
 - in person at the Sheriff's department tax office, downtown Parkersburg, across from the Blennerhassett hotel, (same place you pay your real estate and personal property taxes)
 - by mail to: Wood County Fire Service Board, P.O. Box 2005, Parkersburg, WV 26102
 - Fire fee invoices must be paid with cash or Check (made out to Wood County Sheriff). We are not yet accepting debit or credit cards for payment
- Current fire fee invoices are vague and confusing. It is the Fire Board's intent to change the invoices for the 2018 billing cycle to ensure they are much more precise and easier to understand.
- This fire fee is an annual fee. It is anticipated you will receive your next fire fee invoice in January of 2018.
- The 10 VFD's in Wood County are: Williamstown, Vienna, Washington Bottom, Lubeck, Blennerhassett, Mineral Wells, Eastwood, Pond Creek, Waverly, and Deerwalk.
- If you have questions or think your fee has a mistake, please call 304-424-1991 and leave a message with your name and a return phone number. Your call will be returned as soon as possible (at this time, no one staffs the phone number and therefore you will need to leave a message).
- The complete Wood County Fire Service Board Fire Fee Ordinance can be read at woodcountyfire.com

Thank you for your understanding of the need for this life-saving funding. Your unpaid professional fire fighters in Wood County appreciate the support you provide!

Wood County Fire Board