

2008 Fire Services Special Assessment FAQs

Why am I receiving this letter?

The Board of County Commissioners will be considering a change to the Fire Service Special Assessment methodology and rates. Florida Statute, Chapter 197 requires us to notify all affected residents prior to the scheduled public hearing. This is just a notice of hearing. This is not a bill and the rates have not been approved yet by the Board.

Who is receiving this letter?

All property owners in unincorporated Brevard, West Melbourne, Melbourne Village, Palm Shores, and Grant/Valkaria received this notice of hearing. These are the areas of Brevard County that receive fire protection services from Brevard County Fire Rescue.

Is this charge in addition to the current assessment?

No. This is a change to the current rate schedule.

Why are you changing the fire assessment rates?

Brevard County Fire Rescue is proposing a more equitable rate system for residential parcels. A new methodology for residential rates was developed by a consultant group. All non-residential (commercial), multi-family properties such as apartment communities, and mobile home parks will receive a 15% reduction in their rates if this proposal is approved by the Board.

How did you get these rates? What are these rates based on?

Our consultants, Burton & Associates, spent several months working with Fire Rescue staff, Property Appraiser's staff, as well as other county staff, to identify an alternative methodology for our residential parcels. These rates are based on the property use code assigned by the Property Appraiser's office, the base square footage of the structures on the property, and the base rate benefit factor. The base rate benefit factor was determined by using a value maintained in the Property Appraiser's system that represents the building cost per square foot.

Where did you get the information on my property?

All of our information comes from the property appraiser's office. You can look up your parcel at www.brevardpropertyappraiser.com.

I have more than one structure on my property and this isn't the correct use code.

We use the primary use code assigned by the Property Appraiser to determine our rates. If you have more than one structure, and each structure has a different use code, we do not have the capability to use that information in our billing system. We can only use one use code per property.

What type of assessment is this?

This is a non-ad valorem MSBU, or municipal service benefit unit. You are charged this assessment based on the benefit to your property that you receive from fire protection service.

Will you be offering a Low Income Assistance Program this year?

Due to an informal opinion given by the State Attorney General of Florida, we can not offer a reduction to anyone based on income.

Is this a one time charge?

This is an annual assessment collected with your property taxes to support fire protection services. The first year for this assessment was FY 2006/2007. If this proposal is accepted by the Board these rates will continue in effect until the Board decides to address this issue again.

Is this an increase or a decrease?

All commercial properties will get a 15% decrease from the rate charged in the last two years. Residential properties less than 1800 square feet will receive a decrease, while residential properties over 1800 square feet will receive an increase over the rates from the past two years.

What will my rate be with this change?

The rate that you will assessed is shown on your letter.

Why is my rate higher than the rate schedule in the paper?

If you live in West Melbourne, Melbourne Village, or Palm Shores, you are paying an extra 25% based on the 2006 rates due to not being assessed for fire protection service that year. This additional charge is being added for each of four years starting with your 2007 assessment. This additional charge will stay the same for 2008, 2009, and 2010. This extra charge is included in the total amount shown on your letter.

What is the base rate factor or haz code?

A haz code is a hazard code assigned to commercial properties based on the property use codes designated by the property appraiser's office. The hazard codes come from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The haz cards are based on the potential for fire.

The base rate factor is based on the use code, the base square footage, and a value that represents the building cost per square foot.

If they do not agree with the property information they will need to contact the Property Appraiser's office at 264-6700.