



Kirkland Fire Department Basic Life Support (BLS) Transport User Fees

Patient Frequently Asked Questions

In March 2011 the Kirkland Fire Department began its Basic Life Support (BLS) Transport User Fee Program. The Program was established to create a sustainable revenue source to support essential emergency medical services. Fees from the BLS transport user fee will help cover the cost of providing emergency medical service to the Kirkland community. Without this new revenue the Fire Department would have had to reduce service levels. Initially, the transport fees will be used to maintain the current level of service; in the future, the fees will be used to improve service, reduce response times, and provide greater EMS resources to the community.

The purpose of this handout is to help you understand what to expect if you are transported to a medical facility by the Kirkland Fire Department.

Is there a charge for calling 911 for a medical emergency?

There is no fee for calling 911. The transport user fee only applies when a Kirkland Fire Department aid unit transports you to a medical facility.

How much is the transport user fee?

Effective January 1, 2014, the transport user fee is \$623.59 plus \$14.55 per mile, as established in the Kirkland Municipal Code. The fee is adjusted annually, on January first, to reflect changes in inflation. There is no fee for calling 911.

How will the billing process work for Kirkland residents?

As a patient who was transported by the City of Kirkland, your insurance company will be billed. Even if the insurance company only pays a portion of the fee, it will be considered paid in full. You will not be responsible any unpaid balance.

- If you are an employee who becomes sick or injured while at work, you will be treated as a resident for billing purposes.
- If you are a patient without insurance, you will be billed for the full transport user fee. However, you may be eligible for financial assistance.
- If you refuse to sign appropriate forms or have not provided complete insurance information, you will be billed directly for the full fee. An opportunity to provide insurance information and sign authorization forms will be included with the bill.

How will the billing process work if I am not a Kirkland resident?

If you live outside Kirkland but are transported by the Kirkland Fire Department, your insurance company will be billed. The balance not covered by insurance will be billed to you (the patient).

- If you are a patient without insurance, you will be billed for the full transport user fee. However, they may be eligible for financial assistance.
- If you refuse to sign appropriate forms or have not provided complete insurance information, you will be billed directly for the full fee. An opportunity to provide insurance information and sign authorization forms will be included with the bill.

Do late fees apply?

There is no late fee or finance charge associated with the transport user fee.

What if I do not have health insurance or cannot afford to pay for the service?

You will receive service regardless of your ability to pay. You may have coverage under other policies. Many auto and homeowner insurance policies provide some medical coverage and you are encouraged to review your various insurance policies to verify the limits of coverage under each policy.

What options do I have to pay the bill?

In order to maintain a fair and equitable system for all users and the taxpayers, the City and its billing services provider must issue bills according to our BLS transport billing policy. Every effort will be made to accommodate those who wish to pay on an installment plan or apply for payment relief through our financial assistance policy.

Is financial relief available?

Yes. The Kirkland Fire Department has established a financial assistance policy that is consistent with State law on hospital charity care; supported by a sliding scale, and based on Federal poverty guidelines.

As a patient, you may demonstrate an inability to pay in one of two ways:

1. An application form may be obtained from our billing services provider. When the application is complete and returned, Fire Department representatives will determine if you qualify.
2. The Fire Department will also accept charity care granted by the receiving medical facility as evidence of financial need and will grant proportionally equivalent relief.

Can I refuse ambulance transport?

Yes. Patients who are mentally competent and not a threat to themselves or others may refuse treatment and/or transportation. They will be asked to sign a *Refusal of Treatment or Transportation* form.

Is there a charge for all transports in Kirkland?

If your condition requires Advanced Life Support (ALS) treatment and transport, then there is no transport fee. ALS services in King County are provided regionally and are fully funded by the voter-approved King County EMS (Medic One) levy.

For billing information, contact:

System Design West, LLC Billing Services
PO Box 3510
Silverdale, WA 98383
PH: 800-238-9398
FAX: 360-697-1659
www.emspatient.com/kirklandfire

For program information, contact:

Kirkland Fire Department, EMS Officer
123 Fifth Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033
PH: 425-587-3650
FAX: 425-587-3664
www.kirklandwa.gov/emstransport