



Station 61: 17061 Rolling Creek Dr., Houston, TX., 77090

Station 62: 4362 Louetta Rd., Spring, TX., 77388

Station 63: 21455 Imperial Valley, Houston, TX., 77073

Fire Safety and Fall Decorations

Dried flower, crepe paper, cornstalks, and decorative scarecrows may make your home look festive for fall, but these classic decorations can also pose a scary fire risk.

Read about the

"Five Big Jack-O'-Lanterns with Flameless Lights"

Five big jack-o'-lanterns sat on the walk,
One told a joke and the rest couldn't talk-
They laughed so hard, their toppers shook,
The local neighbor tripped, ...shocked, and dropped his book!

The first made faces, the second just winked,
The third tried to burp but only blinked.
The fourth spun 'round until he got dizzy,
The fifth shouted "Boo!" and made a cat frizzy.

But each pumpkin knew, to keep things bright,
They'd use flameless lights on Halloween night!
"No real flames!" they cheered, "We'll glow with glee,
Safe for all pumpkins- and for you and me!"

So, if you stroll by on Halloween night,
Don't be surprised by their giggling light-
They're pumpkins with jokes and mischief to spare,
Big, round, and goofy, and fire-safe out there!

Fire safety is everyday all day around the clock prevention. Knowing how to be safe keeps your friends, family, and neighbors safe. Protect the ones you love.

Be Knowledgeable,
Be Vigilant,
Be Prepared,
STAY SAFE!



Emergency Services District #28

Texas Legislature 2025

By Ken Koenig, Harris County ESD #28, Treasurer

Harris County Emergency Services District #28 relies on property tax and sales tax to fund the Ponderosa Fire Department. Both sources of funds are controlled by the Texas Legislature which makes it imperative that ESD #28 monitor the bills that are proposed to the Texas Legislature and talk to the Legislators to show support or concerns about the bills that affect the funding for ESD #28.

The 89th Legislature's regular session ran from January 14th to June 2, 2025. There were 8,719 bills that were proposed in the Legislature with only 1,213 becoming law. Of the bills that were introduced, 149 bills affected the ESD's.

Regular Session	House Bills	Senate Bills	Total
Introduced	5,644	3,075	8,719
Passed	619	594	1,213
Vetoed	12	14	26
Tracked	100	49	149

Ad Valorem Tax

Ad Valorem (property) tax has three components that affect the amount of tax collected: the appraised value, the tax rate, and the exemptions. The Harris County Appraisal District sets the appraised value. Exemptions are administered by the appraisal district which includes homestead and veteran exempts. Also, housing finance corporations can grant an exemption to an apartment to subsidize the project for charging reduced rents for low-income housing.

The tax rate is regulated by state law requiring the ESD to go through a lengthy calculation to determine the tax rate, but the tax rate can't exceed \$0.10 per \$100 of the appraised value. That means the maximum tax that an ESD can impose on a house valued at \$200,000 is \$200 per year.

Sales Tax

ESD #28 receives sales tax for retail sales in the district except where the City of Houston executed an agreement to claim certain properties as a limited purpose annexation district. The city doesn't provide any services. There are 15 LPAD's within ESD #28's district where the city collects the 1% sales tax and evenly splits the tax collected with the local MUD. These LPAD's will expire between 2033 and 2040.

Areas of Concern

1. Ad valorem tax concerning property valuation, rates, and exemption
2. Municipalities annexing all or a part of an ESD's district and providing less service or no service to the district annexed.
3. Prohibiting government subdivisions from using tax dollars to hire lobbyists to represent them in the Texas Legislature.
4. Cancer screening for firefighters.
5. Raising the trust hold required for expenditures that require competitive bids.
6. Raising the trust hold that an individual can spend without board approval.
7. Increasing the penalty for filing false reports
8. The location where certain sales are consummated for purposes of sales and use tax.
9. The medium where public notices can be published.

Ad Valorem Tax

Recently, the Houston Housing Authority (HHA) exempted the Ad Valorem tax for several apartment projects in the County which were outside the city limits of Houston. House Bill 21 passed limiting the HHA's authority to grant exemptions strictly within the limit of their sponsor's boundaries (the City of Houston).

Annexation of an ESD by a municipality

Several ESD's in the state had part, or all their district annexed by a municipality, but the municipality provided inferior or no service to the area. Senate Bill 2925 provided that an ESD could challenge the annexation and prevent it from taking place if the ESD could prove that the level of service provided by the municipality was less than the service provided by the ESD.

Lobbyists

Senate Bill 19 relates to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying and certain other activities. This bill died in committee but introduced in the current Special Session that is currently in session as Senate Bill 12, we are opposing this bill.

Harris County ESD #28 jointed several other ESD's in Harris County and hired a Lobbyist to represent us during the regular session #89 of the Legislature. We are members of State Association of Fire & Emergency Districts (Safe-D), which is a political group representing ESD's statewide. Both our Lobbyist and Safe-D would be prohibited from lobbying activities causing the potential loss of funding.

The bill was introduced to stop the big cities from trying to control the legislative process.

Cancer Screening

This bill requires all political subdivisions to give periodic cancer screening to each firefighter at no cost. This law was passed and signed by the Governor. ESD #28 currently does not provide cancer screening to each firefighter therefore there will be higher costs in next year's budget. In addition, we have a sauna at each fire station with an exercycle in the sauna to leach out any carcinogens. We also have implemented various protocols to reduce exposures.

Competitive Bids

Senate Bill 1173 raised the limit for projects that require a competitive bid from \$50,000 to \$100,000. The bill was introduced to keep up with the rising cost of goods and services. The bill was passed.

Expenditures requiring board approval.

Senate Bill 2445 raised the limit that a person to spend without board approval from \$2,000 to \$50,000. This limit was last changed in 1989 and due to inflation and rising costs of routine expenses like fuel, repairs and equipment, the expenditure now exceeds the \$2,000 limit. The bill was passed. It is ESD28's decision whether to implement this change.

False Emergency Reports

House Bill 268 was introduced to enhance the legal framework concerning criminal penalties and associated cost for individuals making false emergency reports in Texas. This bill died in committee.

The Jurisdiction that Collects Sale Tax

House Bill 134 clarifies the location where sales tax is sourced. The law seeks to clarify where the item is shipped or delivered or where the purchaser takes possession, while other types of sales are sourced to the seller's place of business. There was a push to change the source to the distribution center. For example, you purchase something from Amazon, the 1% sales tax collected would either go to the district where the Amazon Distribution center is located or ESD #28. The sales tax collected for Internet Sales through July was \$301 thousand, which is 15.7% of the total tax collected. Statewide the sales tax collected for Special Purpose Districts from internet sales is estimated to be \$130 million.

Public Notices

Senate Bill 1062 amends the law that stipulates the type of newspaper acceptable for publishing public notices. The amendment permits governmental entities to publish notices in a digital newspaper as an alternative to a traditional print newspaper. The Houston Chronicle charges between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to publish a written public notice.

The bill was passed.



Stay in touch with Ponderosa Fire Department on Facebook and be sure to turn on notifications to get updated postings.

<https://www.facebook.com/PonderosaFD/>



Ponderosa Fire Department Station 61

Serving Harris County ESD #28 with Excellence and Heart

Whether you're in Rolling Creek, Northview, or Louetta, the Ponderosa Fire Department is standing by with top-tier equipment, elite training, and a deep commitment to public safety. Here's what makes them one of the most respected departments in Texas:



Service Area

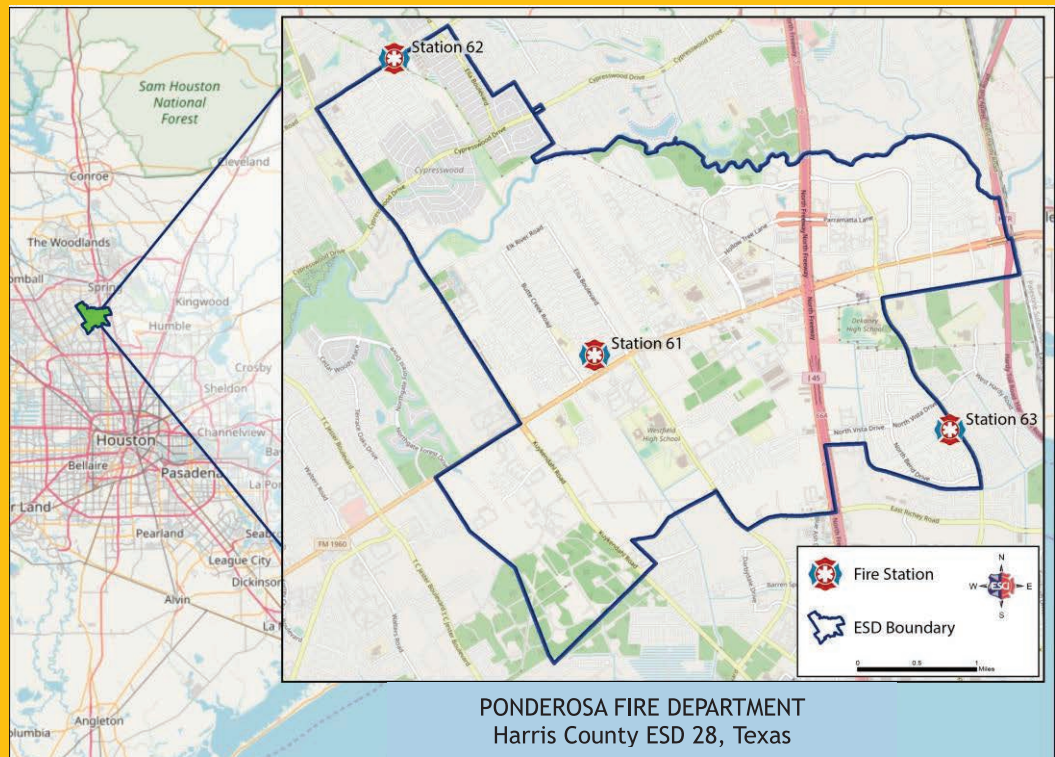
ZIP Codes:

77090, 77073, 77014, 77388



Stations:

- Fire Department 61, Headquarters, 17061 Rolling Creek Dr., Houston, TX 77090
- Fire Department 62, 4362 Louetta Rd., Spring, TX 77388
- Fire Department 63, Training Facility, 21455 Imperial Valley Dr., Houston, TX 77073



Equipment & Response Readiness

- Four identical Pierce fire engines (Engine 61, 62, 63, and 64) with side-roll airbags and advanced suspension
- Tower 61 for elevated operations
- Rescue 61, Squad 60, Booster 63 for technical and rapid response
- Rescue boats and diving gear for water emergencies



Specialties

- **Advanced Fire Suppression:** Standardized fleet for efficient training and operations
- **Rescue Operations:** Vehicle extrication, water rescue
- **Fire Prevention & Public Education:** School programs, seasonal campaigns, Kids Page
- **Training & Development:** In-house certification and simulation drills
- **Emergency Communications:** Seamless dispatch and mutual aid coordination



Founding Story of the Ponderosa Fire Department

- **Year of Independence:** In 1976, the Ponderosa area officially established its own fire department, separating from broader regional services to better serve the growing needs of North Harris County.
- **Grassroots Construction:** Just one year later, in 1977, the department expanded with two additional bays and an upstairs training room – and here’s the kicker: The firefighters themselves did the majority of the construction. It wasn’t just a job; it was a labor of love and community pride.
- **Early Equipment:** Alongside the new facilities, a light rescue truck was added to the fleet, marking the beginning of a more specialized and responsive emergency service.
- **Community Roots:** From the start, Ponderosa Fire Department was deeply embedded in the local fabric – not just responding to emergencies but actively building the infrastructure to protect their neighbors.



Founding Challenges of the Ponderosa Fire Department

Infrastructure from Scratch

- When the department became independent, it didn’t inherit a fully equipped station. In 1977, firefighters themselves constructed two additional bays and an upstairs training room, often working after hours and on weekends.
- This DIY approach meant juggling emergency calls with literal brick-and-mortar labor – a rare blend of service and sweat equity.

Limited Equipment



- Early on, the department had to operate with minimal gear. The addition of a light rescue truck was a big step forward, but it highlighted how lean their resources were.
- Specialized equipment like rescue boats and diving gear came much later, after years of incremental upgrades.

A 1972 Ward La-France pumper was the station’s first engine. They still have this engine located at Station 62 and a Pierce mini pumper joined the fleet in 1976.

Training & Standardization

- Without a formal training facility at first, firefighters had to rely on borrowed spaces and ad-hoc instruction.
- The eventual creation of a dedicated training facility at Station 63 was a game-changer, but it took time and funding to get there.

Community Trust & Identity

- As a newly independent department, Ponderosa had to earn the trust of residents who were used to broader county services.
- Building a reputation for reliability and professionalism was a slow process – one call, one rescue, one fire at a time.

The Ponderosa Fire Department overcame its early challenges through a mix of community grit, strategic partnerships, and smart resource acquisition. This breakdown of key resources helped them rise from humble beginnings to a well-equipped emergency service it is today.

The community and neighborhoods that Ponderosa Fire Department service are fortunate to have a highly functional and well-equipped fire service while knowing your tax dollars are well spent and strategically placed to enhance the community’s safety.

Your tax dollars are hard at work in Ponderosa Fire Department where duty, commitment, and pride with “service first” is the daily motto.



Stay up to date with Ponderosa Fire Department on their website and be sure to bookmark the page for future access.

<https://www.ponderosavfd.org>



Ponderosa Fire Department Station 62



Fire safety in schools is a critical concern that requires comprehensive planning, strict adherence to regulations, and regular training. With thousands of students and staff depending on safe facilities, it is crucial to implement preventive measures and emergency response strategies to minimize the risk of fire-related incidents.

Fire drills prepare students and staff to respond effectively in emergencies. Key consideration include:

- Conduct drills at least once per term, with announced and unannounced scenarios.
- Simulate real-life conditions, such as blocked exits, to test adaptability.
- Assign buddies or adult helpers to assist students with special needs.
- Use roll calls and checklists to ensure everyone is accounted for.

STOP DROP ROLL

This technique is primarily taught to children and adults as a method to safely extinguish flames if their clothing catches fire. It is a simple yet effective way to prevent serious burns and injuries during a fire emergency. This technique is part of fire safety education programs and is widely recognized in North America and beyond.

1. **STOP:** The fire step is to stop moving. This is crucial because running can fan the flames and make the fire worse. Staying still helps prevent the fire from spreading.
2. **DROP:** Next, drop to the ground. If possible, lie down to cover your face with your hands to protect it from flames. This position helps to minimize the area exposed to the fire.
3. **ROLL:** Finally, roll over and over or back and forth on the ground. This action helps to smother the flames by depriving them of oxygen, which is necessary for the fire to continue burning. If available, rolling on a rug or blanket can enhance the effectiveness of this step.





School bus drivers do everything they can to keep children safe, but motorists are also responsible for driving safely around school buses. In 2024, 11 people were killed and 93 seriously injured in the 2,480 crashes involving school buses in Texas. Driver inattention and speed were the top contributing factors in those crashed according to the Texas Department of Transportation.

Here are some tips for students while on the roadways with vehicles.

- Stand as far back from the curb as possible when you are waiting for a bus.
- Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop and watch for the driver to signal that it's safe to board.
- Listen to the bus driver and remain seated to avoid distracting the driver.
- When exiting the bus, cross only in front of the bus, never behind it.
- Make eye contact with the driver and wait for the driver's signal that it's safe to cross the street.

Here are some tips for drivers sharing the road with school buses.

- Follow school buses at a safe distance, keeping in mind that they make frequent stops.
- Watch for children around buses and remember that they may not always look for vehicles before crossing the street.
- Always stop for flashing red lights or a stop sign on a school bus regardless of which direction you're headed, unless the bus is on the opposite roadway of a divided highway. Continue once the bus has moved, the flashing lights stop flashing, or the bus driver signals it's okay to pass.
- Violation can lead to a fine of up to \$1,250.00 for a first offense.



Texting while driving is illegal everywhere in Texas, and some cities ban all cellphones use while driving. But using your cellphone while driving is always dangerous because it's distracted driving.

Cellphone laws to remember.

- You cannot send or receive electronic message while driving in Texas.
- Drivers with learner's permits are prohibited from using cellphones in the first six months of driving.
- Using any handheld device in your vehicle in a school zone is illegal.
- Drivers under the age of 18 are prohibited from using handheld devices.
- School bus drivers may not use cellphones at all while driving if children are present.
- Cellphone laws can change from city to city.
- Pull off the road entirely and come to a complete stop before you talk or text.

All distractions- whether texting, eating, grooming, or having a conversation-can be dangerous. Every driver and every passenger, regardless of age, can be impacted by distracted driving.

Remember, distracted driving is any activity that takes your attention from the road while driving.

Be Responsible and Drive Safe.

Do not be the cause,
an accident happened.





Keep up to date with Ponderosa Fire Department by visiting the

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/PonderosaFD>
and

Websites:

<https://www.ponderosavfd.org>

<https://www.esd28.com>



Ponderosa Fire Department Station 63



**Never leave
your child alone
in a car.**

Your car heats up faster than you think. Help reduce the number of deaths from heatstroke by remembering to ACT.

A: Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car, not even for a minute.

C: Create reminders by putting something in the back of your car next to your child such as a briefcase, a purse or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination.

T: Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911.

**SAFE
KIDS**
WORLDWIDE
safekids.org

To prevent hot car deaths, Texas has implemented various safety measures and resources. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, to check the back seat before locking the doors, and to use visual cues like placing a personal item in the back seat. We are creatures of habit so sometimes a parent unintentionally will leave the child in the seat. Newer vehicles have an option to turn on "rear seat occupied" when the vehicle is turned off. Be sure to have this option turned on.

A situational example: *the mother of the child always takes the baby to day care. For some reason, the mom cannot take the child to daycare, and the dad is task with the duty. The dad is used to going straight to work.* What you should do to help remind you that your day is different is to leave your work lanyard, phone, bag, wallet, or lunch to ensure you look in the back seat before leaving the vehicle.

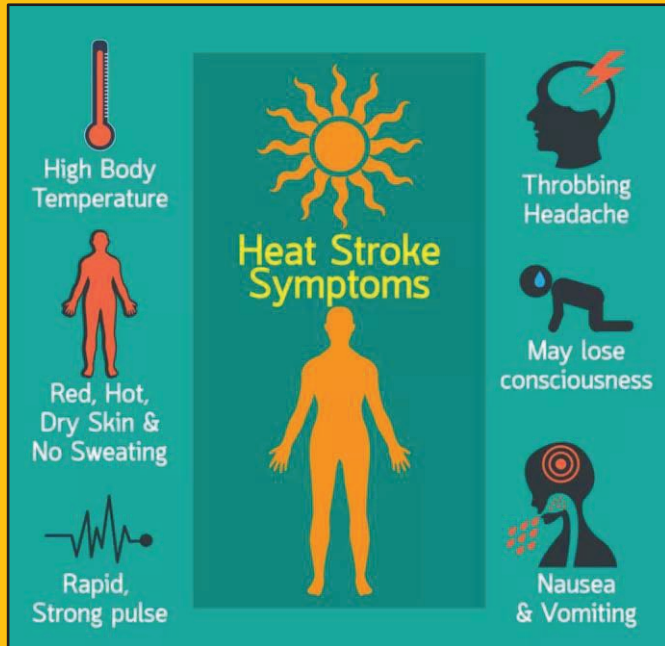
Sometimes parents think *well, the truck is in the shade, or the air conditioner is on in the truck, or I'm parked under a shady tree, and it's okay to leave my child there.* Unfortunately, it's never okay to leave the child. Never leave your children unattended. It is against the law, and it can be a deadly decision.

Summer and Fall are hot in Texas. It is important to stay safe from torching temperatures in Texas by always checking the backseat and making sure kids are protected and safe.

Heatstroke can begin at 104 degrees Fahrenheit, and death can occur at 107 degrees Fahrenheit. Cracking the windows does not make that much difference in the temperature inside the vehicle.

In Texas, hyperthermia, including heat exhaustion and heatstroke, is a significant concern for children. Heatstroke is the most severe form of hyperthermia and can lead to major organ failure. In Texas, it is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related deaths in children younger than age 15. Children's bodies heat up three to five times faster than adults, and cars can heat up quickly, in just 10 minutes increasing its temperature by 20 degrees.

Adult Heat Stroke



Heat stroke is a serious condition caused by the body overheating, typically due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures or intense physical activity, and it requires immediate medical attention.

What is Heat Stroke?

Heat stroke occurs when the body temperature rises to 104 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, leading to severe complications. It can result from two main types:

- **Exertional Heat Stroke:** Caused by intense physical activity in hot weather, often affecting those not acclimated to high temperatures.
- **Classic (Non-Exertional) Heat Stroke:** Typically, occurs in older adults or those with chronic health conditions, often due to prolonged exposure to hot environments.

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

Common symptoms include:

- **High Body Temperature:** Core temperature above 104 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Altered Mental State:** Confusion, agitation, slurred speech, or loss of consciousness.
- **Skin Changes:** Hot, dry skin in classic heat stroke; profuse sweating in exertional heat stroke.
- **Nausea and Vomiting:** Feeling sick to the stomach or vomiting.
- **Flushed Skin:** Redness of the skin as body temperature increases.
- **Rapid Breathing:** Increased in respiratory rate.

Risk Factors

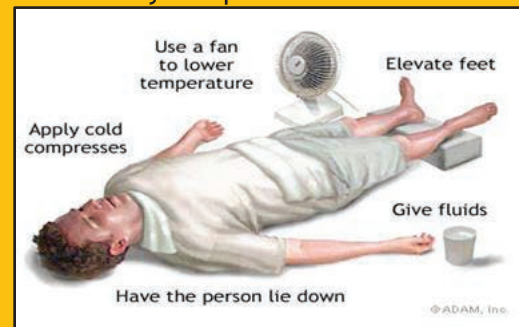
Several Factors can increase the risk of heat stroke in adults:

- **Age:** Older adults (over 65) are at higher risk due to decreased ability to regulate body temperature.
- **Health Conditions:** Chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, can impair the body's heat regulation.
- **Sudden Temperature Changes:** Rapid exposure to high temperatures can overwhelm the body's cooling mechanisms.
- **Dehydration:** Not drinking enough fluids can lead to overheating.

Treatment and First Aid

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. If you suspect someone has heat stroke, take the following steps while waiting for emergency services:

1. **Call 911:** Immediate medical attention is crucial.
2. **Move to a Cooler Place:** Get the person to an air-conditioned environment or a shaded area.
3. **Remove Excess Clothing:** This helps the body cool down more effectively.
4. **Cool the Person:** Use fans, wet cloths, or ice packs on the neck, armpits, and groin to lower body temperature.



Prevention

To prevent heat stroke, especially during hot weather:

- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of fluids, especially water.
- **Limit Outdoor Activities:** Avoid strenuous activities during peak heat hours.
- **Acclimate to Heat:** Gradually increase exposure to high temperatures to help the body adjust.
- **Wear Appropriate Clothing:** Light, loose-fitting clothing can help keep the body cool. Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition that requires prompt action and treatment. Understanding the symptoms and risk factors can help in preventing this serious health issue.

Curtis J. Cook Training Facility



Training Highlights

Vehicle Extrication Techniques

With several new firefighters recently assigned to our station, this hands-on training is a valuable opportunity to introduce critical rescue scenarios frequently encountered.

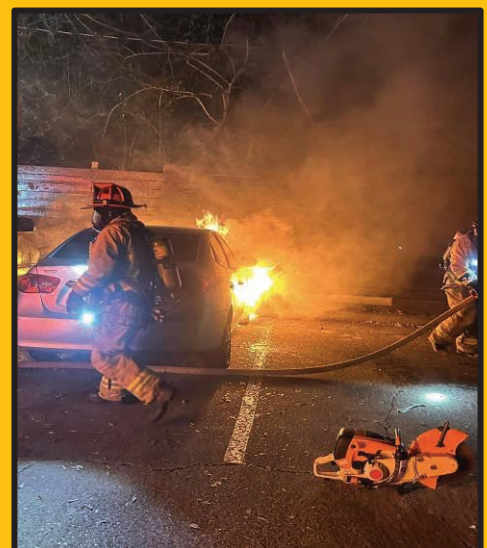
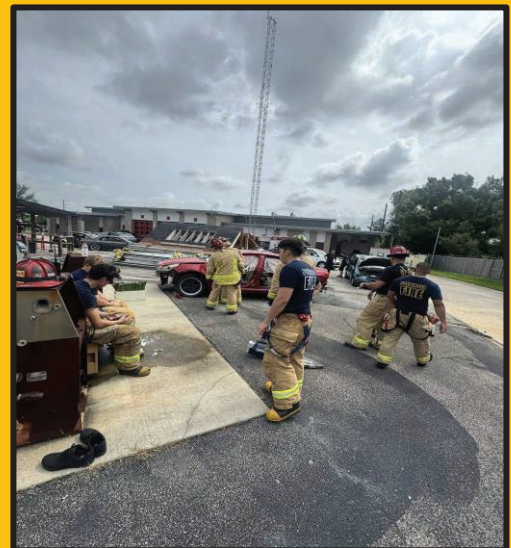
Ponderosa Fire Department response area includes numerous high-traffic streets and major highways, making motor vehicle accidents a regular part of our emergency calls.



During training, our crews worked through realistic scenarios including vehicle rollovers where stabilizing overturned vehicles is demonstrated using eDraulic tools. We demonstrate safe and efficient extrication of simulated victims.



These exercises not only sharpen technical skills but strengthen coordination, communication, and safety awareness among the crews- all of which are essential in high-stress rescue operations.



Remembering 911

The memory of the firefighters who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, is a poignant reminder of their bravery and dedication. They were not only heroes but also the backbone of the fire service, providing critical support during the rescue and recovery efforts. The legacy of these firefighters continues to be honored through various events, tributes, and memorials, ensuring that their sacrifices are remembered and celebrated.



Outside the Ponderosa Fire Station #62 is part of a beam which once belonged to one of the 110-story towers of the World Trade Center that stood high in the Manhattan skyline.

This artifact sits outside their station at 4362 Louetta Rd. Like many others across the country, the beam serves as a reminder to the community of what happened on September 11, 2001. The beam is one of 2,00 shared to public entities across the country but this is one of the few in Texas. The attackers wanted to tear this country apart, but the effects of September the 11th had a different effect, it brought us together.

A Fireman's Prayer

When I am called to duty, God, wherever flames may rage, give me strength to save some life, whatever be its age.



Help me embrace a little child, before it is too late,
Or save an older person from, the horror of that fate.



Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout,
and quickly and efficiently, to put the fire out.



I want to fill my calling, and give the best in me,
to guard my every neighbor, and protect their property,



And if according to my fate, I am to lose my life,
please bless with your protecting hand, my children, and my wife.

In Remembrance of those who have lost their life saving another.

P O N D E R O S A FIREFIGHTER

HARRIS COUNTY ESD #28

17061 Rolling Creek Dr.
Houston, TX 77090



This publication is intended for the residents within the Ponderosa Fire Department service area. If you received this newsletter in error, we hope you still read it and utilize the fire safety information. Copyright 2025, ESD #28, Ponderosa Fire Department

Ponderosa Fire Department announces that nine of our dedicated members from A, B, and C shifts recently completed the Rescue Boat Operator course with Triad Rescue International.

This hands-on training is crucial given the frequency of hurricanes and severe weather in the Houston area, and it ensures our team is prepared to respond quickly and safely to water-related emergencies.



During the course, we also had the opportunity to get our own equipment out on the water, allowing us to test, adjust, and fine-tune it for real-world operations. This proactive step helps ensure we're always ready when our community needs us.

