



Frequently Asked Questions about the City of Clermont's Proposed Fire Assessment

Q. What is a fire assessment?

A. A fire assessment is an annual charge to fund the fire department's operations.

Q. Who is charged this assessment?

A. If implemented, all properties within the City of Clermont will be charged the assessment, except those that are exempt by state law, which are federal and state buildings and public schools.

Q. Why is the city implementing a fire assessment?

A. A number of factors led to the City's proposal to implement a fire assessment:

- Need to build a new fire station to serve residents and businesses on the east side of Clermont, including our newly annexed property.
- Depletion of reserves due to the recent recession when the reserves were needed to maintain fire protection services.
- Provides an alternative to raising taxes, so that the fire services costs are more fairly shared by all those who are benefiting.
- Diversifies revenue sources, which provides more stability to the Fire Department budget.

Q. What are the rates based on?

A. The rates are based on a study that was conducted by outside, independent experts who calculated the benefit for each type of property. (single-family/duplex/mobile home, multi-family, commercial, industrial/warehouse, institutional, vacant/agricultural land). State law requires that the rates be proportional to the benefits the property owner receives.

The information about your property comes from the Lake County Property Appraiser. Should you have questions related about your property category, contact the property appraiser's office at 352-343-9748.

Q. Is this a one-time charge?

A. If approved, this assessment would be an annual charge.

Q. What is the fire assessment going to fund?

A. The assessments can only be used to fund fire-rescue services and cannot be used for any other purpose.

Q. How will this affect property taxes?

A. It is yet to be determined. The City Council has several options that include keeping the current millage (property tax rate), using a rollback rate or other rate. The Council has put a cap on the millage rate, regardless of whether it approves a fire assessment.

Q. When would I be billed? And how?

A. The fire assessment would be part of the property tax bill that you will receive in November.

Q. Is the fire assessment tax deductible?

A. No.

Q. When will a decision be made?

A. The City Council will vote on the fire assessment fee at its regular meeting on August 25. The meeting starts at 6:30 PM in the City Council Chambers located at 685 N. Montrose St. in downtown Clermont.

Q. What if I have more questions?

A. Call 352-241-7358.