



## Eastern Peninsula Highway Emergency Service Area

144 N. Binkley Street, Soldotna, Alaska 99669 • (907) 262-4441 • (907) 262-1892 Fax

*A Service Area of the Kenai Peninsula Borough*

Charlie Pierce  
Borough Mayor

10-29-2019

The Eastern Peninsula Highway Emergency Service Area provides fire protection and emergency medical services within the highway corridor between mileposts 8.5 - 75 Seward Highway, mile 0 – 13 Hope Highway, and mile 37-58 of the Sterling Highway, consisting of 101.5 highway miles.

These services are provided by volunteer agencies who are but not limited to; Hope Sunrise Emergency Services, Moose Pass Fire Co., Cooper Landing Emergency Services and Seward Volunteer Ambulance Corps and Girdwood Fire Department.

When the weather permits, we often coordinate patient transfers to LifeMed helicopters who can respond directly to the scene of an accident. The goal of these responses is to provide a high level of skill to a patient with multiple injuries at the accident scene and quickly transport to a fully equipped trauma facility.

Our Mission is to provide consistent and coordinated response to incidents requiring fire and emergency medical services along heavily traveled highway corridor. In keeping with our mission, we divided the 101.5 miles of highway into 5 segments and assigned Primary, Secondary, & Tertiary volunteer agencies to respond in each facet of response needed; 1<sup>st</sup> Responder, Ground Ambulance Transport, & Extrication/Fire. All of these agencies struggle for recruitment and retention of their volunteers.

On 10/14/19, EHESA Coordinators were asked to do an on-camera interview with KTUU regarding the closure of the Silvertip DOT station and what it would mean to the communities. Although the interview included questions regarding what the closure means to the emergency responders, that part of the interview did not air.

We do not feel the citizens who travel thru that portion of the Seward Highway completely understand that due to safety reasons, we as volunteer Fire/EMS responders will do our best to respond but might be unable to arrive due to road conditions.

Emergency response is already difficult for this remote area of the Seward Highway. The volunteer emergency responders are tasked with long difficult responses, and this will only make their jobs more difficult with more responses, and risk lives that drive the Seward Highway during the winter months.

Page -2-  
Date 10-29-2019  
RE: Silver Tip DOT Station Closure

---

On 10/24/19, we received a notice from Girdwood Fire Chief Weston that they will most likely be declining responding into the Non-DOT maintained Seward Hwy area during the winter evenings when it is not maintained by DOT due to safety concerns for our volunteer firefighters and equipment. The lack of law enforcement and now DOT winter maintenance creates a high risk for us responding with no information on road conditions or incident information to make an informed safety decision on sending apparatus and personnel.

Today 10/28/19, we received word that the Seward Airport will be closed due to flooding issues leaving LifeMed fixed wing medical air transportation unable to land in Seward. The Alaska Railroad runs parallel with the Kewcheck and Salmon Creeks from Mile 5 to 7 and was unavailable last year due to flooding issues and only a matter of time before it is unsafe for travel again.

This leaves the Seward Highway as the ONLY infrastructure in and out of Seward and surrounding areas. Not only does the lack of maintenance of the Seward Highway effect the local businesses, this will greatly affect the emergency 1<sup>st</sup> responders and the ability to provide emergency medical services in the time of need.

Connie Bacon, Chief  
EPHESA Coordinator