

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, March 24, 2026.

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Today in Port Hadlock, Congresswoman Emily Randall's Casework Connections team will be hosting a Casework event from 10:30am to 4pm at the Jefferson County Library. If you need help with a federal agency, the Casework Team can help you to expedite passports; deal with Social Security, Medicare, and VA benefits; handle the IRS and tax forms; get help with citizenship and immigration services, and more. Walk-ins are welcome.

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Next Tuesday, March 31, East Jefferson Fire Rescue (EJFR) will be conducting a structure training burn on a single story residence on Umatilla Road in Port Townsend. This structure was offered by the property owner to EJFR for training and demolition. According to Jefferson County records, the structure was built in 1936 and is no longer safe for human habitation.

EJFR typically utilizes the Fire Training Center at Station 2 on Jacob Miller Road in Port Townsend for annual live fire training, using small fires in durable metal shipping containers to practice hose deployment and fire suppression techniques. But live fire training on an actual building provides opportunities to practice more typical and complex activities, including search and rescue, firefighter safety and recovery, smoke control and ventilation techniques, breaching of walls and doors, and analysis of fire and smoke flow patterns.

On the day of the training event, staging will begin at 8 am, safety walkthroughs will begin around 9:30, and training exercises will commence around 10:00am. Four teams will practice extinguishing small, controlled fires in individual rooms over the course of about three hours, rotating through primary suppression, secondary back up, firefighter rescue, and rehabilitation.

Once these rotations have been completed, the equipment and personnel will be repositioned for the full burning of the structure. Firefighters will be placed around the perimeter of the structure to protect nearby vegetation and neighboring properties. The anticipated window for the full burn is between 1 and 5pm. The peak time of the full burn should last 20 to 30 minutes. Efforts will be made to limit public exposure to smoke using strategic ventilation points to direct heat and smoke to rise vertically, and heavy equipment to compress unburned portions of the structure into the burning portions to keep the fire hot, resulting in efficient rise of the smoke.

Despite the training event, all EJFR stations will remain staffed at full capacity, as personnel assigned to the training event are not on shift that day. For public safety and firefighter safety, the public will not be allowed to come into the protected area. A section of Umatilla Road will be closed to through traffic during the event. For questions, contact EJFR at 360-385-2626.

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Because traffic stops can be anxiety-inducing encounters, especially for people with autism, a new bill in Washington is launching a "Blue Envelope" program to improve communication between neurodivergent people and police during stops. According to the Washington State *Standard*, the blue envelopes will be available to drivers at no cost through licensing offices across the state. The program is voluntary and doesn't require any medical documentation. Conditions that meet the definition of neurodivergence in the bill include autism, ADHD, OCD, bipolar disorder, dyslexia, and Tourette syndrome, among others. The envelopes will describe what documents should go inside the envelope, such as vehicle registration and proof of insurance, and

will provide instructions for safe interactions, suggesting the arresting officer speak calmly, ask simple questions, and avoid loud noises, touching and bright lights. The law will take effect in mid-June, and the state Department of Licensing anticipates it could issue 18,000 of the envelopes per year.

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And finally, because the federal government stopped making pennies last year, Governor Ferguson has signed a new bill into law that offers a way to make change without using pennies. The bill now allows retailers to round cash purchases up or down to the nearest 5 cents when they make change. Payments with credit or debit cards are not affected.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). I'm Diane Walker. Thank you for listening.