

MARBLEHEAD FIRE DEPARTMENT

VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE · PROP 2½ OVERRIDE QUESTION

The **Marblehead Fire Department** protects all residents through fire suppression, emergency medical response, and community safety programs. Staffing has fallen from **42 firefighters in 2023 to just 38 today**, with minimal staffing that drives costly overtime, burdens personnel, and reduces response capability. The department handles medical emergencies, structure fires, hazmat calls, and mutual aid.

FIRE DEPARTMENT DIVISIONS & CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

■ Fire Suppression

Responds to structure fires, vehicle fires, and brush fires. Full crews act simultaneously, making the difference between a successful rescue and a tragedy. Minimally staffed shifts cannot perform simultaneous operations.

■ Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Firefighter-EMTs provide first-response care, reaching cardiac events and serious trauma before an ambulance arrives. Every minute matters; full staffing saves lives by cutting response times.

■ Hazmat & Technical Rescue

Handles hazardous materials incidents, water rescues, confined-space emergencies, and vehicle extrication. Requires stable, experienced staffing to maintain specialized certifications.

■ Fleet & Equipment

Maintains apparatus, SCBA gear, medical equipment, and vehicles, keeping engines, ladders, and rescue units ready year-round for every type of emergency call.

* Storm & Disaster Response

Responds to storm-related emergencies, flooding, and community disasters. Minimal staffing limits capacity to handle simultaneous calls during major weather events.

■ Public Education & Prevention

Fully staffed shifts allow time for fire safety education, home inspections, school programs, and proactive community risk prevention serving all Marblehead residents.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR MARBLEHEAD

■ INVEST PLAN

\$15 Million Override · Phased Over 3 Years

2 Firefighters Added (Tier 2): Returns department to 40, a first step toward full staffing and reducing forced overtime on every shift

2 Additional Firefighters (4 total) (Tier 3): Returns department to 42, restoring 2023 staffing levels and ending minimal staffing levels

Cost-Neutral Hiring (Tier 3): Straight-time salaries replace expensive overtime hours; the same dollars already being spent redirected into full-time positions with predictable costs

Faster Medical Response (Tier 3): Fully crewed shifts reach cardiac events and trauma calls faster, with firefighter-EMTs on scene before ambulance arrival

Burnout Prevention (Tier 3): Eliminates forced overtime, reducing fatigue and clinical errors, keeping first responders alert and high-performing

Retention & Stability (Tier 3): Predictable schedules protect the town's training investment and retain experienced firefighters

New Revenue / Medical Transport (Tier 3): Full staffing enables a municipal medical transport program, a new income stream offsetting department costs

■ NO OVERRIDE

FY27 Balanced Budget Cuts Take Effect

Staffing Cuts

Positions eliminated from an already minimally staffed department, down from 42 in 2023 to 38 today, potentially fewer

Overtime Costs Escalate

Mandatory overtime continues with volatile, unpredictable costs and no end in sight

Slower Emergency Response

Minimally staffed crews cannot act simultaneously at fire and medical scenes, increasing risk to residents and firefighters

Personnel Burnout Worsens

Continued forced overtime accelerates fatigue, errors, injuries, and turnover among experienced personnel

Lost Revenue Opportunity

Medical transport services cannot launch, forfeiting a potential new revenue stream for Marblehead taxpayers

Community Safety Programs Cut

Fewer personnel limits fire prevention outreach, home safety evaluations, and mutual aid for neighboring communities

Training Investment Wasted

Burnout-driven turnover means the town repeatedly pays to train replacements for experienced firefighters who leave