

**Hidden Valley Fire District
Frequently Asked Questions
May 2021**

What is a fire district?

A fire district is a special taxing district created under Arizona Revised Statutes Title 48, Chapter 5. The Hidden Valley Fire District (or District) is governed by a Board of three, non-partisan, uncompensated residents of the District elected at large by registered voters within the District. The Board sets the District's annual budget and the County levies a secondary property tax to pay for the District's expenses. Aside from some relatively minor legal and administrative expenses, the tax revenues pay for a contract the District has with Rural Metro Corporation to provide emergency medical and fire protection services.

Do I live in the Hidden Valley Fire District?

A map of District boundaries is provided below, but to be sure, you should check your property tax statement for a Hidden Valley Fire District line item or contact the Pima County Assessor's office.

Generally speaking, the District includes all of the Sabino Mountain HOA, all but one property in the Hidden Valley HOA, and most of the properties in the Sabino Town & Country HOA. There are also a few properties within the District that may not belong to any HOA.

What services are provided by Rural Metro?

The District's contract with Rural Metro provides a variety of services to District residents, including but not limited to:

- Paramedic (i.e., advanced life support) emergency response
- Fire emergency response
- Search and rescue
- Fire prevention services
- Fire cause determinations and investigation
- Enforcement of applicable regulations and local fire codes
- Community information and education services
- Venomous snake removal

What other benefits do I receive as a result of being in a fire district?

- As a member of a fire district, you may qualify for a discount on your homeowner's insurance. Some insurers may actually require you to have fire protection service, whether through a fire district or an individual subscription with Rural Metro.
- Because the District tax is included in your property taxes, your costs are eligible as a deduction on your federal tax return.
- Your costs are further reduced by state funding, which provides fire districts with up to 20% of their funds.

- Because every household in the District is subject to the tax, costs are further reduced by leveraging down the rate charged by Rural Metro, which would otherwise not be able to enroll 100% of a community's members on an annual subscription basis.
- Finally, as long as the District's contract with Rural Metro is in effect, residents are guaranteed the services above with the convenience of not having to subscribe with Rural Metro on an individual basis, or renew or renegotiate their subscription rates.

What are the costs of belonging to the District and how are they determined?

Your cost is stated on the "Hidden Valley FD" line item of your Pima County Property Tax Statement. The cost is the product of the District's tax rate times your property's taxable net assessed value divided by 100. The current tax rate (2020-2021) is \$0.8012 per \$100 of assessed value. The tax rate is adjusted annually to collect sufficient funds for the Rural Metro contract, plus relatively minor administrative and legal fees. Budgets are posted on the agenda of the District's annual meeting each summer (see District website below).

The current Rural Metro contract came into effect on July 1, 2010 at a cost of \$102,500 per year. For ten years, this cost was only increased to account for inflation and for expansions of the District's boundaries. When properties are annexed by the District, the cost only increases by the percentage increase in square footage. As a result, the District's tax rate is the lowest in the county and currently 27% lower than the second-lowest fire district tax rate. It is also substantially lower than what homeowners pay outside the District when they subscribe to Rural Metro on an individual basis.

What happens if there is no contract in effect with Rural Metro?

Without a contract, homeowners would have to subscribe individually with Rural Metro to receive the full range of services above. However, Rural Metro emergency services are dispatched by county officials, so Rural Metro will always respond to local 911 calls. The principal difference between having and not having a subscription is that Rural Metro will bill the homeowner for the cost of the service after the fact if the homeowner is not a subscriber. In this sense, a Rural Metro subscription is like having extended homeowners' insurance. Without a Hidden Valley contract with Rural Metro, some homeowners may need to purchase an individual subscription to ensure coverage by their homeowners' insurance.

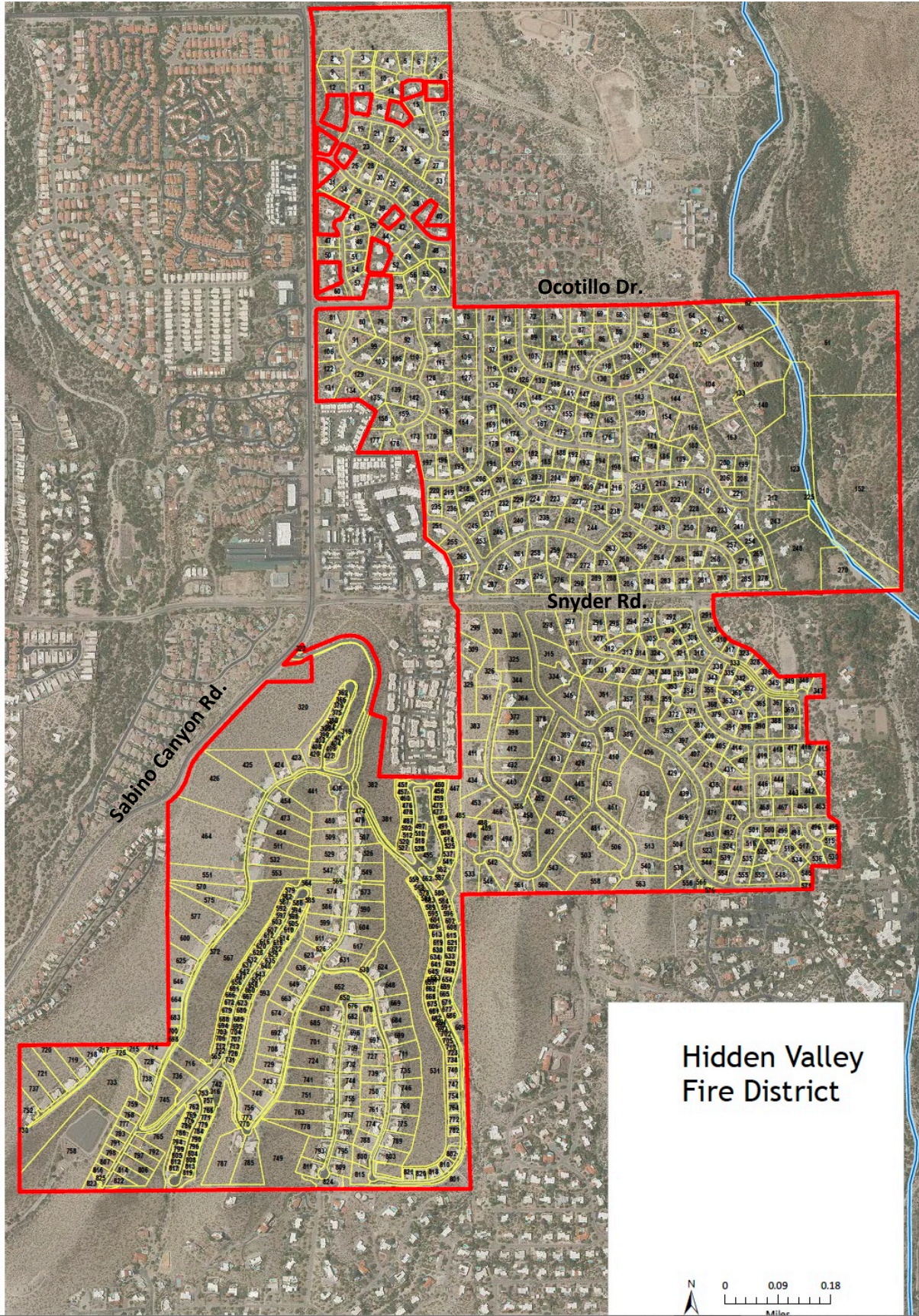
How are ambulance fees administered?

Ambulance fees are not included in the District's contract or in individual Rural Metro subscriptions. When a person is transported in an ambulance, Rural Metro will bill Medicare, third party payers, or the individual pursuant to rates approved by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

More Information

More information is available at the District's website below, including Board meeting notices, agendas, and minutes, Board member information, the Rural Metro contract, the District's ISO [public fire protection] rating, ambulance rates, and annual reports to the county. You can also contact the Board through the Contact page.

<https://www.hiddenvalleyfd.org/>



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