



Blaine County Fire & Rescue
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Two Blaine County Fire Districts Become One on October 1

BC South and Ketchum consolidate to form the Blaine County Fire District, operating as Blaine County Fire & Rescue

HAILEY, Idaho — The BC South Fire Protection District and the Ketchum Fire District will consolidate into a single fire district on October 1, 2026, creating one agency responsible for fire protection and emergency medical services across a combined area of the Wood River Valley. Both boards of fire commissioners approved the consolidation in September.

The new agency is organized as the Blaine County Fire District and will operate publicly as Blaine County Fire & Rescue. It will provide fire suppression, advanced life support emergency medical services and ambulance transport, technical and backcountry rescue, wildland and wildland-urban interface firefighting, hazardous materials response, fire prevention, and public education.

For residents, the immediate change is limited. The same firefighters and paramedics will respond from the same stations, and the number to call remains 911. What changes is behind the response: one command structure, one training program, one set of policies, and one budget, in place of two of each.

Blaine County has studied consolidation since 1991, and four consultant studies over the past twelve years have recommended it. In 2021, a study commissioned by the Blaine County Ambulance District recommended consolidating the valley agencies. Ketchum voters took the decisive step that followed, with more than 70 percent voting to move the Ketchum Fire Department out from under the City of Ketchum and form the Ketchum Fire District to consolidate. In 2025, the Ketchum and BC South boards jointly hired a fire chief to carry out the consolidation.

The two districts, together with the Hailey Fire Department, have already been operating jointly under a joint powers agreement, sharing administration, apparatus, and staffing across jurisdictional lines. October 1 makes permanent an arrangement the three agencies have been proving in the field.

“I’ve only been part of this effort for about a year. I was hired to complete a consolidation that Blaine County has studied for more than 30 years. The credit belongs to the community, our elected officials, and especially the firefighters and paramedics who have already set the conditions for Blaine County Fire & Rescue to be a resilient, efficient, and effective organization. We proved the concept over the past months under a joint powers agreement—running calls together, sharing

stations and apparatus, and operating as one team in the field. On October 1 we take the first formal step: one command structure, one training program, one set of policies, and one budget. That is what neither agency could do as well alone, and it is how we begin building ‘One Valley – One Team’ for the people who do this work and the people we serve.” — Fire Chief Kevan Crawley.

“Our board voted for consolidation because the case has been studied for decades, the crews have already proved it in the field under the joint powers agreement, and our taxpayers deserve one accountable organization instead of multiple overlapping ones. For BC South residents, the change on October 1 is not a new station or a new number to call—it is a stronger system behind the same firefighters and paramedics they already know. One organization gives us the flexibility to put the right resources on the right call as demand grows, while keeping local representation through elected commissioners. This honors the work of Wood River Fire & Rescue, West Magic, and BC South and puts our constituents on a more resilient footing for the long term.” — Dennis Kavanagh, Chair, BC South Fire Protection District Board of Fire Commissioners.

“October 1st marks a historic day in Blaine County as Blaine County Fire and Rescue officially launches. The leadup has been many decades of studies, attempts and challenges to valley wide fire and EMS consolidation. It is an absolute honor and privilege to be part of the team that has brought this to fruition. Consolidation will bring greater unity of leadership, operations and increased efficiency to the valley, by providing flexibility and coordination to the crews and stations as response needs continue to grow in number and difficulty.” — Pete Schwartz, Chair, Ketchum Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners.

Governance

The sitting commissioners of both districts will form the new district's board on October 1, serving in an interim composition of five commissioners from BC South and three from Ketchum until January 2028. After that transition, a five-member board will govern the district, with each commissioner elected to represent a sub-district, as Idaho law provides.

Hailey Annexation Question on the November Ballot

Separately, Hailey voters will decide on November 3 whether the City of Hailey will be annexed into the new fire district. That question is before the voters, and the outcome will determine whether the Hailey Fire Department joins the district. The consolidation taking effect October 1 proceeds regardless of that result.

Looking Ahead

The district's first year will focus on integration: a single policy manual, unified training and qualification standards, common apparatus and equipment specifications, and a combined budget. Administration will be deliberately lean during that first year, deferring decisions on capital improvements until they can be made with a full year of combined financial experience.

About Blaine County Fire & Rescue

The mission of Blaine County Fire & Rescue is to provide comprehensive, high-quality emergency services — including fire suppression, advanced EMS, technical rescue, wildland firefighting, and hazard mitigation — throughout Blaine County. By leveraging shared resources, reducing administrative redundancies, and fostering a professional, well-supported workforce, we prioritize public safety, deliver excellent value to taxpayers, maintain transparency in governance, and honor the proud heritage of the participating fire districts while building a more resilient future for all. ONE VALLEY – ONE TEAM

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