



2025 TOWN OF MERTON FIRE PROTECTION FEE UPDATE

Wis. Stat 60.55 requires the Town Board to provide fire protection for the Town. Over the past few years, the Town of Merton has undertaken a detailed and comprehensive work effort to determine the best way to fund the necessary service of fire protection to its residents.

The 2024 Real Estate Tax Bill will have a fire fee for the 2025 costs to have fire protection from the three departments (Western Lakes, Village of Hartland and the Village of Merton) that cover the Town of Merton. All properties – residential, commercial, institutional and tax exempt – within the Town are required to pay a fire service fee.

The fire fee formula is calculated through different variables including: acreage, residential square footage, outbuilding square footage and commercial square footage. By including all these variables, the fee is more equitably divided by the billing unit or Domestic User Equivalent (DUE), to determine each parcels fire service fee. Since commercial property owners have to pay a fire inspection fee to the Fire Department, their cost per square footage is lower than the residential square footage.

The Fire Protection Service Fee has been divided into three phases, with the year 2025 representing the third phase of the revised costs and service levels. The adjustments to be implemented in 2025 include additional in-house staff at the Hartland and Merton Fire Departments. Due to a decline in the availability of paid-on-call residents serving on the fire departments around the clock, the three departments that service the Town of Merton have had to modify their staffing models to ensure services. This modification incorporates a combination of full-time paid personal personnel, part-time staff, and paid-on-call employees. As a result, we have dedicated firefighters/EMT's/paramedics available to the residences around the clock, which has led to improved response times due to these enhancements.

Town of Merton In Station Staffing Coverage

	2023	2024	2025
Merton Day	2	2	3
Merton Night	2	2	2
Hartland Day	3	4	5
Hartland Night	2	2	3
Stone Bank Day	3	4	5
Stone Bank Night	3	4	5
Okauchee Day	3	4	5
Okauchee Night	3	4	5