

FIRE ASSESSMENT FAQ's

How is the assessment calculated? Each building is assessed for its *total square footage under roof*, its *hazard classification*, and the *historical demand* for each hazard class. A *Net Factored Fire Protection Unit (FFPU)* amount is calculated which is multiplied by the *rate per FFPU*. The proposed rate is \$133.00 per Net FFPU. A system of tiers within the hazard classes based on building size determines how many FFPU's are assigned to a building. The list of hazard class tier ranges is available in the Fire Assessment Memorandum at www.gfr.org.

What is a hazard class? The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has five hazard classifications ranging from 3 (most hazardous) to 7 (least hazardous). The complete NFPA list of hazard classes may be viewed at www.gfr.org. Examples include:

- Class 3 (HZ3) - sawmills, flour mills, and plastic processing facilities
- Class 4 (HZ4) - warehouses, department stores, exhibition halls, and paper mills
- Class 5 (HZ5) - restaurants, laundromats, and plant nurseries
- Class 6 (HZ6) - bakeries, barber shops, places of religious assembly, and gas stations
- Class 7 (HZ7) - residences, hotels, nursing homes, schools, and offices

What does total square footage include? Drive-thrus, covered walkways, carports, garages, and porches are added to the main area of a building. The square footage is determined by the Alachua County Property Appraiser's staff and may be viewed on their website at www.acpafl.org.

What is historical demand? Historical demand is the response load within each hazard class based on one year of incident reports in the Florida Fire Incident Reporting System (FFIRS) provided by the City.

Are all property types subject to the special assessment for fire services? The special assessment applies to all improved property in the City, including property owned by places of religious assembly and non-profit organizations; however, the City may pay the special assessment on behalf of qualified religious and charitable organizations. The City is not legally allowed to require payment for special assessments on government-owned properties.

What period of time does the assessment cover and when is the assessment payable? This special assessment covers October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. It is a non-ad valorem amount that is payable with the annual property tax bills between November 1 and March 31. The discounts and penalties applicable to ad- valorem taxes also apply to the special assessment.

Are special assessments tax-deductible? Property owners should consult with their tax preparers or Internal Revenue Service resources for information on tax deductions.



Special Assessment for Fire Services

Supplemental information for property owners with buildings inside the Gainesville, FL city limits.

Look inside for information on assistance for low-income owners and for mobile home / RV park vacancy credits.

Is your building sprinklered?
Check inside for information on reducing your assessment with a fire-flow mitigation application.

The City of Gainesville implemented a special assessment for fire services effective October 1, 2010. Since the special assessment is collected with annual property tax bills, the City works with the Alachua County Property Appraiser to include the special assessment in the annual Truth in Millage (TRIM) statement of proposed taxes.

What is the purpose of the special assessment for fire services?

It provides a dedicated and equitable funding source for a portion of the cost of providing fire protection services.

The City expects to collect approximately \$9,523,538 from this special assessment.

CREDITS AND ASSISTANCE

Assessments are on the property tax bill and are treated the same as property taxes. Failure to pay the assessments will cause a tax certificate to be issued against this property and may result in loss of title.

All property owners have the right to appear at the Public Hearing on SEPTEMBER 13, 2021, and to file written objections with the Gainesville City Commission within 20 days of this notice. The Public Hearing will be held in the City Hall Auditorium at 200 East University Avenue at 6:00 pm or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, requires us to notify you that if you decide to contest any decisions made at the public hearing on these assessments, you will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, you may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings (a word for word written copy of the entire public hearing) is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this meeting must notify the Office of Equity and Inclusion at 352-334-5051 or call the TDD phone line at 352-334-2069 at least two business days in advance.

Applications for credits and assistance are submitted between January 1st and May 1st of the tax year in advance of the tax bill you will receive in November.

To receive credit for 2021, applications should be submitted between January 1, 2021 and May 1, 2021.

A late application period will be open from August 16, 2021 through August 31, 2021.

Assistance for low-income owners:

Low-income property owners may apply for hardship assistance. Applications and eligibility requirements are available at www.gfr.org or by calling Gainesville Fire Rescue at 352-334-5078.

The annual due date for hardship applications is May 1st. A late application period will be open from August 16, 2021 through August 31, 2021.

If you previously received an approval letter for 2021 for hardship assistance, and the Fire Special Assessment still reflects an amount due on this notice, please contact us at 352-334-5024.

Fire Flow Mitigation (Sprinkler) and Mobile Home/RV Vacancy Credits:

Credits may be applied to the total factored fire protection units (FFPU's) for buildings that are fully protected by sprinkler systems and for vacant lots in mobile home and recreational vehicle parks. Applications may be obtained from the website at www.gfr.org or by calling Gainesville Fire Rescue at 352-334-5078.

The annual due date for sprinkler and mobile home/recreational vehicle vacancy applications is May 1st. A late application period will be open from August 16, 2021 through August 31, 2021.

The complete *Fire Assessment Memorandum* for the City of Gainesville is available at www.gfr.org.

Questions may be directed to Gainesville Fire Rescue at 352-334-5078 or
emailed to gfrpio@cityofgainesville.org