



## SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT BOARD

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The Saugatuck Township Fire District Board—made up of representatives appointed by Saugatuck, Douglas, and Saugatuck Township—would like to dispel misinformation concerning our cost-recovery policies currently making its way through local rumor mills.

Simply put, cost-recovery aims to ensure taxpayers aren't paying for services that are provided to non-taxpayers, or for incidents that were caused by negligence.

The fire chief did not create the cost-recovery policy. The STFD Board adopted its cost-recovery policy and it was approved by the three jurisdictions between 2006 and 2009, and modified by the Township last year.

The STFD does not routinely send out bills for its services. In fact, within Saugatuck Township since 2014, cost-recovery has been sought in just seven out of more than 1,300 incidents. The total collected from Township residents in those cases was \$4,900. Other parties—most often insurance companies—paid back an additional \$38,160 to taxpayers by way of cost-recovery.

There is nothing arbitrary when cost-recovery is sought. Two examples illustrate this: A recent barn fire was the direct result of an owner's illegal installation of a wood-burning stove (including a chimney installed backwards), and triggered the District's cost-recovery effort. In another instance, to help cover services rendered after a DUI accident on I-196, the STFD sought payment from the out-of-state motorist who was at fault.

Finally, the STFD Board takes its responsibilities seriously. We welcome the public at our meetings, and our agendas are published in advance. Our website is a wealth of information about the STFD team and its performance, District incident statistics, as well as fire-prevention and safety. We actively solicit and listen to responsible public comment, suggestions, and other input. We do not, however, condone misinformation, rumor mongering, or political gamesmanship when it comes to the Fire District's important work.

By majority vote, this letter was adopted by the STFD Board as a public statement in open meeting on October 26, 2018, and authorized for publication.