

= Leschi (fireboat) =

Leschi , named for the native American leader Chief Leschi , is a fireboat operated by the Seattle Fire Department . The ship was laid down in 2006 and commissioned in 2007 ; its sponsor was Sharon Nickels , wife of the then @-@ mayor Greg Nickels .

The 108 @-@ foot (33 m) Leschi has been described as the " dreadnought of Seattle 's fireboat fleet " . Carrying a normal complement of four , its mission includes firefighting , search and rescue , and response to chemical , biological , radiological , nuclear , and explosive (CBRNE) emergencies . It can also be used as a mobile pump and fuel station and as emergency medical treatment and command center .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

Seattle is one of the largest ports on the United States west coast and waterfront fires have been a continual concern for the city . Since 1891 the Seattle Fire Department has regularly operated at least two fireboats , which can be augmented by ships and small craft with fire suppression capabilities from the U.S. Coast Guard , Seattle Police , and neighboring municipalities . One of the worst maritime fires in the city 's history occurred in 1968 when an electrical malfunction at Todd Shipyards sparked a fire that took 14 engine companies , two fireboats , two U.S. Coast Guard cutters , and several conscripted Foss Maritime tugboats more than half @-@ a @-@ day to extinguish .

In the 1970s the United States Maritime Administration funded a special program to train a contingent of 50 Seattle firefighters to provide land @-@ based support in the control and extinguishing of dockside and shipboard conflagrations . The effort , which was studied by the Stanford Research Institute , later became a model for other waterfront cities .

= = = Procurement = = =

Prior to Leschi 's construction , Seattle 's flagship firefighting vessel was the aging Alki , which was built in 1927 and operated alongside a newer vessel , Chief Seattle . Once known as the world 's third " most powerful fireboat , " by the early 2000s the antique Alki had become increasingly difficult to operate . On one occasion , in 2003 , an engine problem left the vessel dead in the water and the ship was only able to move by firing its legendarily powerful water cannons .

Procurement of a modern fireboat to replace Alki was part of a successful public safety levy enacted by Seattle voters in 2003 approving its construction . Leschi was built at a cost of \$ 12 million by Dakota Creek Industries of Anacortes , Washington , from a design by Jensen Marine Consultants . The Seattle Fire Department took delivery of the vessel in 2007 during a commissioning ceremony attended by mayor Greg Nickels . The ship sponsor was Nickels ' wife , Sharon . The name , Leschi , had been suggested by Kadi Camara , a Seattle elementary school student , as part of a naming competition held by the city . It was meant to honor a former Nisqually chief . Camara got to ride on the ship as a prize . Following the commissioning of Leschi , Alki was retired . Leschi is berthed on Elliott Bay where it is the primary response vehicle for maritime fires on the city 's outer shoreline .

= = Design and specifications = =

Described as the " dreadnought of Seattle 's fireboat fleet , " Leschi is one of three such vessels currently operated by the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) , the others being Chief Seattle and Marine One . The 108 @-@ foot (33 m) Leschi is powered by twin diesel engines rated at 1 @,@ 550 @-@ horsepower (1 @,@ 160 kW) turning 72 @-@ inch (1 @,@ 800 mm) four @-@ blade

propellers , which give the ship a flank speed of 14 knots . Two additional engines , rated at 1 @, @ 440 @-@ horsepower (1 @, @ 070 kW) , power the ship 's four water pumps . Unlike its predecessor , Alki , Leschi has touchscreen consoles for bridge command controls instead of manual " knobs and levers " . By displacement and pump capacity , it is the largest of ten municipal @-@ owned fireboats that support the U.S. Coast Guard 's regional marine firefighting plan for Puget Sound .

= = Mission and capabilities = =

According to Professional Mariner , Leschi 's mission is " firefighting , mobile platform for emergency medical treatment and command center , mobile pump and fuel station , and response to chemical , biological , radiological , nuclear , and explosive (CBRNE) emergencies "

The ship 's principal fire suppression equipment comes in the form of four 5 @, @ 000 @-@ US @-@ gallon (19 @, @ 000 l ; 4 @, @ 200 imp gal) per @-@ minute water pumps . In addition to pumping water , the ship 's firefighting apparatus can tap an integrated 6 @, @ 000 @-@ US @-@ gallon (23 @, @ 000 l ; 5 @, @ 000 imp gal) foam tank for use against chemical @-@ fueled fires . Leschi also has a 55 @-@ foot (17 m) telescoping crane with ladder and fire line for use against container ship fires and the ship is able to douse itself with a cooling fog to allow for operation directly adjacent to a major fire .

In addition to marine firefighting , Leschi can support land @-@ based firefighters in the event of a disaster that destroys Seattle 's water mains . Manifolds on Leschi 's deck provide ports through which hose lines can be run to provide fire engines with direct access to seawater .

Leschi is designed to operate with a complement of four personnel , but has a command and communications room for use by senior SFD officers in the event of a catastrophe that renders land facilities unusable . The ship is outfitted with a CBRN defense system for crew protection in the event of a nuclear or chemical weapons attack against Seattle , or similar disaster . When activated , the system automatically seals pressurized hatches to the bridge and command center ; uncontaminated air is provided by a fan and filter system .

The ship is regularly equipped with a rigid @-@ hulled inflatable boat that can be launched from the ship 's stern . A thermal imaging camera system allows the ship 's crew to locate distressed persons in the water (such as in a man overboard emergency) at night or during other low @-@ visibility conditions .