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# OREGON

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Oregon State Police  
**Office of State Fire Marshal**  
4760 Portland Road NE  
Salem, OR 97305-1760  
503-373-1540  
Fax 503-373-1825  
TTY 503-390-4661  
E-mail: [Oregon.sfm@state.or.us](mailto:Oregon.sfm@state.or.us)  
[www.sfm.state.or.us](http://www.sfm.state.or.us)

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## **For Immediate Release**

Contact: Rich Hoover 503-934-8217, office or 503-370-0033, pager

### **Chief deputy state fire marshal urges citizens to take steps during Wildfire Awareness Week**

May 6-12 is Wildfire Awareness Week in Oregon and Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal Jim Walker is asking homeowners to use this opportunity to make sure their home is protected from wildfire.

In a unified proclamation, governors from Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, and California have joined to encourage homeowners to begin thinking about the approaching fire season. This year's Wildfire Awareness Week theme asks: *Have you done enough to protect your home from wildfire?*

“The roof is the most critical part of the house when it comes to wildfire protection,” says Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal Jim Walker. “Embers can collect and ignite on the roof, in gutters, and enter unscreened openings around the house. Although non-combustible roofing material is preferred, regardless of the construction, keep roofs, gutters and eaves clear of all leaves, pine needles and other flammable debris.”

The Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, in collaboration with Keep Oregon Green, the Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon forest protective associations, and federal wildland agencies are taking this opportunity to promote defensible space around homes before fire strikes this summer.

To reduce the risk, fire officials suggest removing dead vegetation a minimum of 30 feet around your house. In most cases, trees and healthy plants do not need to be removed. However, trees should be pruned and grass kept short and green to keep fire on the ground and more manageable by fire crews. If you're thinking of landscaping, ask your local nursery or OSU Extension agent about fire resistant plants.

Homeowners should also keep access in mind for large fire trucks. Long driveways should be at least 12 feet wide, have 10 feet of vegetation clearance from the centerline out, and about 14 feet overhead. Large vehicle turnaround areas are critical for your safety as well as firefighter safety.

It is the homeowners' responsibility to protect their homes by building defensible space. For more information, visit the websites for [Keep Oregon Green](#), [Oregon Department of Forestry](#), or call your nearest [ODF or forest protective association office](#).

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