

School Safety and Emergency Management

Monthly Minute: Wildfire Preparedness

June 2025

Monthly Minute is a newsletter providing insight and tips on potential threats and hazards brought to you by the Oregon Department of Education.



As the school year draws to a close, we should be preparing our facilities and summer activities for the high-risk hazard of wildfires. Wildfires are the highest risk that Oregon schools face during the summer. A wildfire can burn through a community with minimal warning. Even though many of our buildings may be vacant this summer, it is important to understand the risk to our facilities and our communities before a warning comes.

The first thing we should do is sign up for alerts. Go to [oralert.gov](https://www.oralert.gov) to sign up to receive emergency alerts for your area. We should know what the alert levels signify. Here is [a link to a document that identifies what each of the levels mean](#). If you would like this document in other languages (available in Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese), visit the [Wildfire Oregon](#)

page. Everyone in your school community should know that a level 1 evacuation notice means you should prepare to evacuate; a level 2 notice means you should prepare to evacuate at a moment's notice; and a level 3 notice means everyone should evacuate now! Be sure to bookmark the [Wildfire Oregon page on evacuations](#). Your area may not be under an evacuation notice, but you can track fires in nearby areas that may affect air quality or even spread closer to your own community.

Mitigate or even prevent wildfire intrusion by creating a defensible space around your facilities. Cut back brush from the sides of buildings. Make sure to clear any ignitable source off of roofs, out of gutters, or other areas where dry tinder may gather.

In addition to the above measures, your regular emergency preparedness activities shouldn't take a break if you have students in your facilities during the summer. Review your plan before any resumption of student activities. Identify evacuation routes and reunification sites before they are needed. The following rule applies for both evacuation routes and reunification sites: one is none and two is one. You could easily find yourself in a situation where the fire is blocking your primary evacuation route or has burned through your reunification site. Keep in mind that wildfire season will extend into the beginning of school next year.

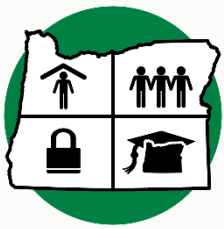
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This Month... Conduct an Evacuate! Drill this month. Remember to implement your Incident Command System fundamentals during planned events.



**Conduct an Evacuate!
Drill in June.**

Up Next... We will be back in July with tips on school safety for summer programs.



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Family Wildfire Preparedness

A safe summer should bring all students back to school in the fall. Prepare your students and families for the dangers of wildfires with the following resources that can be used in classrooms and shared with families:

- **Without Warning Wildfire Comic Book.**
- **Keep Oregon Green (kids corner with activities).**



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Below are some of the key considerations in preparing for wildfire season:

- Maintaining awareness of local wildfire conditions and what the evacuation notice levels are.
- Mitigation measures such as keeping the building and grounds clear of ignitable materials.
- Pre-identified evacuation routes away from the school and to a congregate sheltering area or reunification site.

When wildfire threatens a community, we cannot rely on any single point of failure. We must work together to ensure everyone comes out safely so we can recover together. Let your local emergency responders know what your summer schedule is like

so they can knowingly respond to suspicious or dangerous activity on school grounds. Ask your local fire department to check your school grounds before locking up—they may notice a fire risk you overlooked. For additional guidance on wildfire preparedness and other incident-specific planning, check out the **Emergency Plans and Drills Guidance: Incident-Specific Plans.**

For direct assistance planning or preparing for this summer's activities or associated hazards, contact us at ode.ssem@ode.oregon.gov. Or check out our **contacts page** to get in direct contact with a regional coordinator who is already connected with local and county emergency management.

Contact Information



Scan or click the QR code to visit the School Safety and Emergency Management website with additional school emergency preparedness resources, and to **sign up for the monthly training** and technical assistance sessions.

Resources

[Ready.gov informational page](#) on wildfires.

Sign up for local alerts: [oralert.gov](https://www.oralert.gov)

Bookmark the [current evacuation conditions](#) in Oregon.

Oregon Emergency Management [local contacts list](#).