



OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
**THE GATED WYE**  
DECEMBER 2023

LIVE,  
**LAUGH,**



NEVER PLUG A POWER STRIP  
INTO ANOTHER POWER STRIP.



*'tis the season*  
FOR FIRE SAFETY

## WINTER FIRE SAFETY KEY TO **HAPPY HOLIDAY**

"'Tis the season for fire safety" is the message from the Oregon State Fire Marshal this winter.

Each year, firefighters across the state respond to fires sparked by space heaters, overloaded electrical outlets, candle misuse, and dried-out Christmas trees.

There are a few simple things Oregonians can do during the holiday season to stay safe and avoid sparking a fire. This issue contains a whole host of tips to keep you and your family fire safe this winter.

**READ MORE ON PG. 2.**

### OSFM'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Holiday Fire Safety • P.02

Home Heating • P.03

Codes Corner • P.04

Rural Fire Protection • P.07

Hazmat Vehicles • P.08

IMT Recruitment • P.13

From the Internet • P.16

Contact Us • P.17



# 'TIS THE SEASON FOR

# FIRE SAFETY

The winter months are prime for holiday cheer and time with family, but they also come with a greater risk of fires inside the home. According to FEMA, Christmas trees account for hundreds of fires each year across the U.S. Typically, shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters, or matches start tree fires.

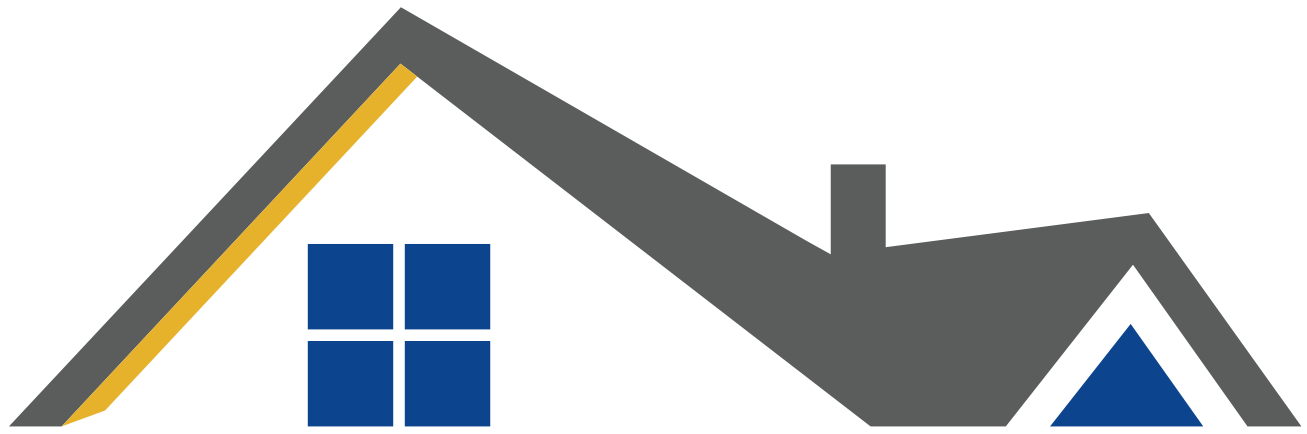
From 2016-2020, 19% of home decoration fires in Oregon were started by candles. In December, that number increased slightly to 22%. Forty-four percent of decoration fires started by candles happened in November, December, and January.

The peak month for home cooking fires in Oregon is December. The average number of monthly cooking fires for January-November is 76. In December, that number jumps dramatically to a total of 112, 32% higher than other months. These stats highlight the importance of fire safety during the winter months and taking extra precautions around holiday festivities.

## WINTER FIRE SAFETY

### CHECK THE LIST & CHECK IT TWICE

- Test and ensure your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working correctly.
- If your plans involve a holiday tree, choose one with fresh, deep-green color and flexible needles.
- Remember to water your tree daily — a tree may consume between a quart and a gallon of water per day.
- Be sure you have at least three feet between your holiday tree and any heating source.
- Ensure the tree is not blocking an exit and that the decorations you use are flame-resistant and flame-retardant.
- Always unplug tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Check your holiday lights before displaying them; inspect them each year for frayed wires, bare spots, and broken or cracked sockets.
- Avoid overloading electrical sockets. Do not link more than three light strands, unless the manufacturer's instructions indicate it is safe.



# 8 TIPS TO KEEP YOUR HOME HEATED SAFELY THIS WINTER

With the winter months upon us, many are turning up thermostats and looking to home heating options. The OSFM offers the following tips to avoid sparking an unintended fire.

- 1** Use heating equipment with the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- 2** Keep things that can burn, such as paper, curtains, bedding, or furniture at least three feet away from all heating equipment, including fireplaces, wood stoves, and pellet stoves.
- 3** Use newer, portable space heaters with an automatic shut-off so they will turn off if they're tipped over. Clean them each year before using and check for product recalls.
- 4** Unplug portable space heaters when not in use, before going to bed, or when leaving the room.
- 5** Make sure fuel-burning heaters are designed for indoor use and are properly ventilated.
- 6** Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected at least once a year by a qualified professional.
- 7** With wood stoves and fireplaces, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned pellets.
- 8** Place ashes in a metal container, soak with water, and keep them at least 10 feet away from the home or anything that can burn. Dispose of the ash only after it is cool.



# CODES CORNER

## HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

According to the National Fire Protection Association, on average, four people die in the U.S. from Christmas decoration fires, resulting in roughly \$14 million in property damage each year. Nearly 800 home fires begin with holiday decorations. These fires usually start in the living room. December and January are the peak period for candle fires.

The requirements for mitigating hazards associated with decorations found inside commercial buildings can be found in Chapter 8 of the Oregon Fire Code. During the holidays, it is especially important to ensure our schools, care homes, assemblies, and other high-volume occupancies are safe for all, which these sections of code address.

Section 806 addresses natural cut trees, obstruction of means of egress, open flame and electrical fixtures, and wiring.

Something the code focuses on is that any portion of a means of egress shall not be obstructed by decorative vegetation. Natural cut trees shall not be located within an exit, corridor, lobby, or vestibule. It also states candles and open flames shall not be used on or near decorative vegetation. Natural cut trees shall be kept a distance from heat vents and any open flame or heat-producing devices not less than the height of the tree.

Section 807 addresses combustible decorative materials, acceptance criteria and reports, artificial decorative vegetation, and occupancy-based requirements

For more than 20 years, the Oregon State Fire Marshal has provided Technical Advisory No. 22-09, Holiday Décor and Fire Safety Guidelines. It provides additional guidance on the use of decorative items during holiday seasons. This [document](#), in conjunction with OFC Section 806, provides practical guidance for fire safety.





# OSFM REMEMBERS DEPUTY STATE FIRE MARSHAL ED HARRIS

The Oregon State Fire Marshal is mourning the loss of a long-time deputy state fire marshal. Ed Harris, 90, passed away on October 29. His wife Betty, 87, passed away two days later on November 1. The couple was married for 66 years.

Ed was born in Southgate, California, and moved to Lakeside, Oregon when he was a boy. A graduate of North Bend High School and Oregon Technical Institute, Ed was a career firefighter and diesel mechanic with the North Bend Fire Department before joining the Oregon State Fire Marshal as a deputy state fire marshal, where he worked as an instructor and arson investigator.

"Deputy State Fire Marshal Harris was one-of-a-kind, someone everyone liked being

around," Oregon State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple said. "His willingness to serve left a lasting impression. He wanted to see everyone succeed and cared deeply for not only his work, but the work of the OSFM and the Oregon fire service. He was loved by so many and will be dearly missed."

Ed was a U.S. Navy Veteran (Korea) and reservist, and a member of Faith Lutheran Church, Freemasons, VFW, American Legion, and Elks. A lifelong tinkerer, he enjoyed electronics and engines, motorcycle and hydroplanes, ham radios, model trains, fishing, camping, and spending time with his family and extended fire families.

The OSFM sends its deepest condolences to the Harris family. May they find comfort in the legacy Ed and Betty left behind.



# IN REMEMBRANCE

# MEMORIAL HELD FOR GRESHAM FIREFIGHTER



On Saturday, December 2, the Oregon fire service paused for a memorial service to honor Gresham Firefighter Brian Flowers.

Flowers passed away on November 19, after battling occupational acute myeloid leukemia. Firefighter Flowers started his career with the Gresham Fire Department in 2008, serving the Gresham community for more than 15 years. He is survived by his wife, Elsie, daughter Carina, sons Darian and Anthony, and his parents and in-laws.

Firefighter Flowers' legacy at Gresham Fire continues with his son Darian, who began his firefighting career with the department in September 2023.

Fire Chief Lewis said, "Our hearts go out to the Flowers family for their terrible loss. For our firefighters and department, Brian's death is compounded by the passing of Firefighter Brandon Norbury last February."

A huge thank you to neighboring agencies Portland Fire and Rescue, Corbett Fire, Clackamas Fire, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, and Port of Portland Fire who covered on-duty Gresham Fire crews while they attended the service.

The Gresham Fire Department was assisted by a volunteer Oregon State Fire Marshal incident management team to plan the service.

A recorded live stream of the service [can be found here](#).





*In late November*, members from across the Oregon fire service and the Oregon State Fire Marshal came together to look at ways to improve response and operations of the fire service in rural Oregon.

The newly-formed Rural Structural Fire Protection Review Committee was established through House Bill 2522, signed into law following the 2023 legislative session.

The 14-member committee is tasked with developing recommendations to modernize and improve structural fire protection operations of rural fire protection districts and to make the operations more efficient.

According to lawmakers, statutes governing rural fire agencies have not been thoroughly reviewed in decades. They say there have been small, “band-aid” changes over the years but nothing significant to meet the challenges rural fire protection districts face.

The committee is expected to meet monthly and must present a recommendations report to the legislature on or before September 15, 2024.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Roger Johnson**  
Taskforce Chair

**Christopher Griffin**  
OFDDA

**Genoa Ingram**  
OFDDA/OFVA

**Mike Cook**  
OFVA

**Karl Koenig**  
OSFFC

**Irik Rinnert**  
OSFFC

**Nick Browne**  
(Alternate: **Brian Stewart**)  
OFCA

**Kevin Cameron**  
(Alternate: **Alvin Klausen**)  
Association of Oregon Counties

**James Cleavenger**  
(Alternate: **Chief Scott Hollett**)  
League of Oregon Cities

**Travis Medema**  
OSFM

**Mariah Rawlins**  
OSFM

**Mike Hussey**  
OFCA

**Ben Stange**  
SDAO

**Ty Darby**  
OFMA



## NEW COMMITTEE LOOKS AT RURAL FIRE PROTECTION



# HAZMAT TEAM 13 RECEIVES NEW **RESPONSE** VEHICLES

In November, the OSFM delivered two new hazmat response vehicles to Salem Fire and Hazmat Team 13.

The department received a Pierce rescue style hazmat response vehicle which replaces their current tractor trailer. Their department also received an F550 to replace their old DECON vehicle.

These new vehicles are a part of our plans to modernize equipment to support Oregon's 13 Regional Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Teams. These teams support their local communities and local incident commanders.

Salem Fire has 24 trained responders who are crucial in safeguarding the community. Their training has prepared them to handle a wide range of hazardous materials situations. The acquisition of these new vehicles underscores the department's commitment to maintaining response capabilities, allowing it to continue providing the highest level of safety and protection to Salem community members and surrounding areas.

The OSFM runs Oregon's hazmat emergency response program through established partnerships and support with the Oregon fire service.











# ONTARIO HOLDS PUSH-IN CEREMONY FOR NEW VEHICLES

It was a day to celebrate in Ontario as the fire department held a push-in ceremony on Friday, November 17. The community welcomed into service several new pieces of equipment including a ladder truck and two hazmat response vehicles.

The 2012 Pierce ladder truck expands the capability of the department. It has a 100-foot ladder and can pump 2,000 gallons of water a minute.

The department also pushed in two new pieces of hazmat response equipment for Hazmat Team 14. The brand-new hazmat heavy duty rescue and the initial response vehicles were delivered on October 30.

The two new hazmat vehicles are part of the OSFM's efforts to modernize response equipment statewide.





# WILDFIRE GRANTS HELPING PREPARE OREGON COMMUNITIES



Across the state, funds from the OSFM's wildfire grants are helping local communities become more fire adapted. Many of these grants are focused on vulnerable areas with a high fire risk. The impact of these funds, made available from Senate Bill 762, is powerful and protecting Oregonians and their property.

Jackson County Fire District 4 and Prospect Rural Fire Protection District in the Upper Rogue are making great use of funds from the OSFM's Community Risk Reduction grant and community wildfire protection plan investments. Jackson County Fire District 4 offers home assessments, a trailer program, and a chipper program to residents of Shady Cove and Prospect.



Recently, these two departments helped a 71-year-old disabled community member with debris removal, making her home safe.

Learn more about the project in [Jackson County here](#). Read about the [OSFM wildfire grants program](#) and the great work these funds are doing across Oregon.

## JOIN THE OSFM SMOKE ALARM INSTALLATION PROGRAM

Is your agency interested in joining the OSFM's Smoke Alarm Installation Program? The program provides smoke alarms to Oregon fire agencies to install in homes that do not have them.

There are several opportunities to learn more about the program during free webinars. Participants will learn about program eligibility and requirements, smoke alarms and installation information, project planning and ideas, and safety materials available to order. The free one-hour live webinar training is required for fire agencies who wish to participate in the program. Click the dates to register.

[January 25, 2024](#)

[February 22, 2024](#)

[March 28, 2024](#)

[April 25, 2024](#)

# GET COMFORTABLE WITH **DEFENSIBLE SPACE.**



## **FIVE WINTER AND SPRING PROJECTS TO CREATE DEFENSIBLE SPACE:**

- 1** **Remove** leaves, pine needles, and other debris from the roof, gutters, and on and under the deck.
- 2** **Trim** tall plants and bushes growing directly under your eaves.
- 3** **Trim** trees and bushes to make sure they have adequate space from your home and other vegetation.
- 4** **Remove** dead and combustible plants and mulch, especially within the first several feet from the home. Replace with decorative rock or gravel.
- 5** **Cover** exterior attic vents, soffit vents, and areas below decks and patios with 1/8" metal wire mesh.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP FOR  
A **FREE DEFENSIBLE ASSESSMENT.**







# OREGON

## STATE FIRE MARSHAL

### OSFM INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAMS RECRUITMENT

The Oregon State Fire Marshal administers three **all-hazard** incident management teams with members from the structural fire service. The teams mobilize primarily to fire incidents threatening lives and structures and also manage a variety of other incidents.

## OPEN RECRUITMENT

**RECRUITMENT OPENED NOVEMBER 14, 2023.**  
**ALL APPLICATIONS DUE BY 5 P.M. DECEMBER 31, 2023.**

The OSFM is seeking applications from qualified individuals or trainee qualified for the following positions:

- Incident Safety Officer
- Public Information Officer
- Division/Group Supervisor
- Resource Unit Leader
- Situation Unit Leader
- Geographic Information Systems Specialist
- Logistics Section Chief
- Equipment Manager
- Communications Unit Leader & Technician

### APPLICATIONS FOR ALL POSITIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AND REVIEWED.

Applicants who do not meet the qualification criteria will not be accepted.

All applicants are asked to submit:

- Application signed by your chief officer
- Letter of intent to include a summary of conflagration and incident management experience
- Two professional references

The recruitment process is selective. Applicants, their provided references, and/or others within the applicant's agency may be contacted by the OSFM staff, incident commanders, and/or IMT section chiefs during the selection process. Applicants should be expected to be interviewed.

**Please send completed applications and required materials to:**

[Mariah.Rawlins@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:Mariah.Rawlins@osfm.oregon.gov).

**Team members are expected to be available** to respond during their team's on-call rotations and remain at an incident for up to 14 days. Team members should be prepared to be logistically self-sufficient for 72 hours.

**Team members should have the full support of their sponsoring agencies** to participate in training, section working groups, and the annual conference. Team members should have access to an agency command vehicle for deployments. It is the expectation of the OSFM and the incident commanders that all team members provide the highest level of customer service to all involved and impacted by an incident. Team members represent their home agency and the state of Oregon and are expected to act professionally.

## CRR WEEK IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Week is quickly approaching. It starts on January 15, Martin Luther King Day, also a National Day of Service. CRR Week is dedicated to promoting awareness of community risk reduction within the fire service.



Do you have a community risk reduction success story for our agency to share? Please email it to us at [osfm.publicaffairs@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:osfm.publicaffairs@osfm.oregon.gov).

Look for an email from the OSFM with resources to engage your department during the week and help spur some great CRR ideas you can do in your community. Let's work together to create a safer Oregon.

Does your agency need brochures or educational materials to help during CRR week and throughout the year? [See what the OSFM offers here.](#)

## 2022 OSFM ANNUAL REPORT SUPPLEMENT AVAILABLE ONLINE

The 2022 Annual Report Supplement is now available for viewing on the Oregon State Fire Marshal website. A copy can be found on the [OSFM's reports page](#). Hard copies are available on request.

The Annual Report Supplement compiles response data from local Oregon fire agencies and looks to identify trends in several areas including origin and cause, frequency, date and time injuries, and fire-related deaths. The report is filled with valuable information and statistics.

The report also includes information about Oregon's Community Right to Know program. The Oregon Community Right to Know and Protection Act requires employers in Oregon that possess certain quantities of

hazardous substances to submit an annual report to the OSFM. This law also requires emergency responders to report to the OSFM incidents involving the release, or threatened release, of hazardous substances.

Oregon fire agencies, please keep an eye out for the annual agency profile survey. This survey helps us keep up-to-date agency information that goes into the Annual Report Supplemental appendices.



OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
**2022 ANNUAL REPORT  
SUPPLEMENT**  
PREPARED // JULY 2023



# RING IN THE NEW YEAR KEEP IT LEGAL KEEP IT SAFE

At the end of December, we will be saying so long 2023, hello 2024! With that comes New Year celebrations and a reminder to be safe with fireworks if they are in your calendar page-turning celebrations. The Oregon State Fire Marshal would like to remind people who choose to use fireworks to do so safely. Oregonians are reminded to keep it safe and keep it legal. Please help share our message about fireworks safety.

- **BE Prepared:** Before lighting fireworks: keep water available by using a garden hose or bucket.
- **BE Safe:** When lighting fireworks: keep children and pets away from fireworks.
- **BE Responsible:** After lighting fireworks: never relight a dud. Please wait 15 to 20 minutes, then soak it in a bucket of water before disposal.
- **BE Aware:** Use only legal fireworks and use them only in legal places.



## WELCOME TO BETHANY WACHTLER

Bethany Wachtler joined the OSFM procurement team in November. She started her state service at the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) publishing and distribution in 2007. She worked in DAS mail services, accounting, fiscal services, and procurement before moving to the Department of Energy in 2015. She has a degree in procurement and supply chain management and a procurement management certificate.

Bethany has lived in Oregon since 1987 and she has four boys. She likes to travel, go to concerts, play cornhole, and go on trips to the beach and the river. She volunteered for the city of Dallas as a firefighter recruit and is a huge 49ers fan and loves the Oregon State Beavers.







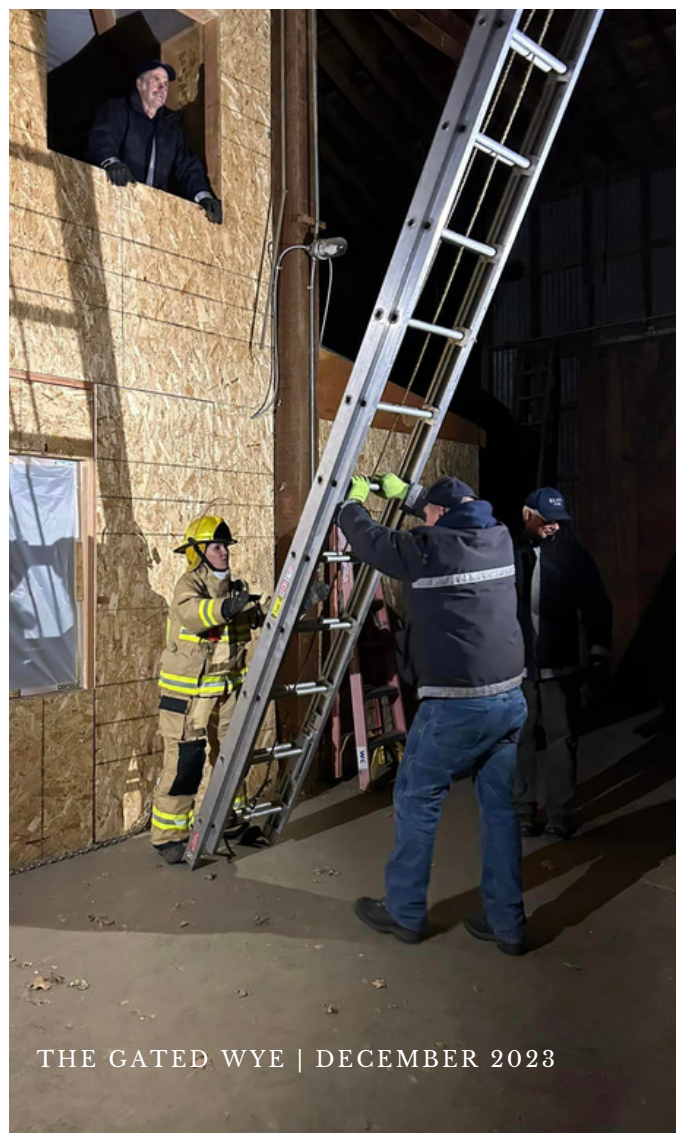
## FROM THE INTERNET

3-2-1 Go! **Estacada Fire District** volunteers and the C-shift duty crew tested their speed at drill in November. This drill consisted of a timed event donning and doffing personal protective equipment followed by chimney fire simulations and other fireground evolutions. This included ladders, ventilation, hose management, apparatus driving, and more. The district said in their post they want to encourage anyone with a wood-burning stove to do a complete inspection of their fireplace to make sure it is in good working order and won't cause a fire. [CHECK OUT THE POST HERE.](#)

## LADDER UP!

Practice makes perfect! The folks at **Elgin Rural Fire Protection District** practiced all things ladder at their training on November 15.

Ladders used in the fire service are widely recognized as a versatile firefighting tool. They sure come in handy when they need to get high up in a hurry. These tools can help trapped occupants from windows or balconies. [CHECK OUT THE PHOTOS HERE.](#)







## Contact Us

Have a story idea or something you would like to know more about?

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