



# OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

# THE GATED WYE

## JANUARY 2024



## 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Oregon State Fire Marshal and the Oregon fire service made great strides in 2023, from wildfire response and hazmat to the OSFM becoming a state agency.

There is a lot to be proud of from 2023 and a lot to look forward to in 2024. In this issue of The Gated Wye, we are looking back on the last year and all the great things that were accomplished, not only for the fire service, but for those living and visiting the great state of Oregon.

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### OSFM'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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# YEAR IN REVIEW CELEBRATING 2023

## REFLECTING ON A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR

As we say goodbye to 2023, it's with immense pride and gratitude that we reflect on the momentous journey of the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) throughout this year. 2023 was not just another calendar flip; it marked significant transitions, achievements, and a steadfast commitment to serving Oregonians.

## NEW AGENCY & NEW HEADQUARTERS

On July 1, 2023, the OSFM began a new chapter in its storied history becoming a state agency. The move empowers the OSFM to chart a more agile and focused path in safeguarding Oregonians. This transition was complemented by our relocation to a new headquarters on Fairview Industrial Drive in Salem, providing us with a modernized hub to strategize, mobilize, and better serve our communities.



## RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

2023 posed its challenges, and the OSFM responded with great might. During the summer months, the OSFM mobilized 52 task forces from 113 local fire agencies, and five strike teams from California. These task forces were called up to respond to seven conflagrations and nearly two dozen pre-positioning and immediate response assignments. The work showcased the dedication and readiness of our teams and the Oregon fire service in the face of adversity.





## GRANTS PROGRAM & COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

In 2023, our grants program soared. This past biennium, a staggering \$82 million was awarded to communities statewide, reinforcing their preparedness and response to wildfires. The launch of the Community Wildfire Risk Reduction grants testified to our commitment, investing \$18 million across 106 organizations to shield high-risk areas and nurture resilient communities. A significant component of this initiative was the \$13.5 million 2023 Oregon Fire Service Capacity Program. Designed to empower small to medium Oregon fire agencies, this program augments firefighting and fire prevention staffing. This specific grant initiative was a beacon for local fire agencies, encouraging the bolstering of permanent firefighting and fire prevention staffing. In June, we allocated funds to 185 agencies through the Wildfire Season Staffing Grant. The funds allowed local fire agencies to hire additional firefighters and extend working hours during the 2023 wildfire season. This initiative proved to be a resounding success in its second year. It helped to amplify our collective efforts through the Oregon Fire Mutual Aid System.

## ENHANCING CAPACITY

The OSFM Engine Program hit full throttle in 2023 and is setup for success in 2024 when Oregon will begin receiving engines. In total, 27 Type 3, 20 Type 6 engines, and 30 water tenders will be strategically positioned across Oregon to boost the state's wildfire response capabilities and help modernize OFMAS. Partnerships with Skeeter and Rosenbauer to construct these engines signify our proactive approach in preparing for future challenges.

## EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S FIREFIGHTERS

Recognizing the imperative to cultivate the next generation of firefighters, our \$3 million investment in apprenticeship programs with Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue and Klamath County Fire District #1 took shape. These initiatives not only mitigate the shortage of firefighters but also strive for diversity and inclusivity in our fire service, echoing the communities we protect.





## DEFENSIBLE SPACE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The OSFM's Defensible Space Assessment Program gained momentum in 2023, with an uptick in assessments completed statewide. By collaborating with Oregon's fire service, we provided free assessments to homeowners, empowering them with tailored recommendations to fortify their properties against potential fire threats. With 54 local fire agencies joining hands, the program is rapidly expanding its reach. So far, 611 homes and properties were inspected, improving their defensible space and adding protection against wildfire impacts. Our staff worked to train a total of 254 assessors to conduct inspections around the state.

## RECORD YEAR

In 2023, the OSFM deputy state fire marshals set a record for the most fire and life safety inspections completed in a single year with 4,561 inspections. Deputies also completed 323 fire investigations. The number of deputy state fire marshals doubled to 26 to better serve Oregonians across the state. Many training courses were given, including seven Oregon Fire Code update courses (8 hours each) with 234 attendees, five mobile food unit courses with 112 attendees, and 17 NFPA Fire Investigation and Fire Inspector 1 & 2 courses for 267 fire service members.

## CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT

The Fire Prevention Education Unit went through a restructuring in January 2023 to boost community risk reduction efforts in Oregon. This comprehensive approach will minimize risks across the state by analyzing and enhancing programs using both state and national data. The focus remains on supporting the Oregon Fire Service to make our communities safer.

Noteworthy accomplishments include the remarkable progress in Community Wildfire Risk Reduction, including over 130 projects totaling \$21M in Senate Bill 762 funding, strategic investments, support for Community Wildfire Preparedness Plans (CWPP), and supporting the establishment of Firewise USA.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The journey of 2023 emboldened us, reminding us of the power of collaboration, innovation, and unwavering commitment to our communities. As we step into the new year, our resolve remains steady: to be a beacon of safety, protection, and fortitude for all Oregonians. Here's to a bright and safe Oregon in 2024 and beyond.





## 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).

Visit our [CRR Week webpage](#) for resources to support your agency's community risk reduction efforts. 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.](#)

## DEADLINE FOR NFIRS DATA FAST APPROACHING

It's that time of year again! The Analytics and Intelligence (A&I) Unit is preparing to close out its 2023 NFIRS data collection activities to begin the annual report. January 15, 2024, is the last day to report all 2023 fire incidents for your agency.

As we look to address risks and build capacity, local fire incident reports provide critical information for Oregon and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The A&I Unit uses this data to help local agencies identify fire and response trends and develop community risk reduction assessments. Meeting data reporting compliance standards is a prerequisite for many state and federal grant opportunities.

If you have coding questions, need assistance with account issues, or would like to know if your agency is NFIRS reporting compliant, you can always contact the A&I Unit. The OSFM offers access to the ImageTrend Elite database to report fire incidents and NFIRS training at no charge to all Oregon fire agencies.







## PRELIMINARY NUMBERS SHOW SUCCESS OF STAFFING GRANT

**Preliminary numbers** show the Oregon fire service response effort was boosted during the 2023 wildfire season. Staff with the Oregon State Fire Marshal grants program is currently sifting through mid-year and final reports.

Early estimates show more than 1,500 personnel were funded through 2023 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant during the peak of wildfire season across Oregon. The grants team is working to gather final numbers as agencies have until January 5 to submit their final report. The team reports most of these personnel are part-time, students/interns, volunteers, and/or seasonal hires.

The 2023 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant awarded nearly \$6 million to 185 local fire agencies across the state to boost firefighting capacity.

The OSFM has received multiple success stories from grant recipients.

*Elgin Rural Fire Protection District's story:*

On July 27, a two-acre grass fire erupted near Jones Butte amid hot, windy conditions. Despite the challenging circumstances, Elgin Rural Fire, an all-volunteer department, swiftly mobilized an engine, brush truck, and tender, an impressive feat for a weekday afternoon. Additional support arrived as more firefighters left their jobs to join the response, bringing extra vehicles to contain the fire's westward spread toward wooded areas, structures, and forest service land. Mutual aid from neighboring departments, ODF, the U.S. Forest Service, and air support helped as the fire grew to 85 acres, prompting level three evacuations. Thankfully, no homes were lost.

The wildfire season staffing grant played a crucial role, enabling more responders from Elgin's station to join, marking the first time in years that every member responded to a fire. The increase in firefighters also boosted capacity to help neighboring counties during emergencies.

Once all reports are submitted, the OSFM will share final numbers. To read about the grant and its success, [the OSFM has published a StoryMap](#).



# 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.**





# NEW RAIL TRAINING PROP CAR ARRIVES

The OSFM and Clackamas Fire Station 14 welcomed a new rail training prop on Friday, December 22.

The new prop will provide training for hazmat team members and firefighters. It will be hosted at Clackamas fire and is available statewide for training.

The prop provides three realistic training opportunities that focus on general service, chlorine, and high-pressure rail domes. The prop can be plumbed with water to simulate liquid leaks, Air for gas leaks, and both air and water for vapor leaks.

The new prop was funded mostly through a federal hazardous material emergency preparedness (HMEP) grant funding.







# GUIDANCE FOR TEMPORARY SHELTERS

As the colder months set in, many cities and organizations across the state will begin to open temporary warming shelters. With this time of year comes the reminder of fire codes in place to keep people safe when inside one of these buildings.

In 2003, the OSFM issued a technical advisory to give guidance on what options are available to those looking to open a temporary warming shelter. The advisory intends to help use a vacant commercial building as a place for people to sleep at night.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal reminds local and state fire professionals that Technical Advisory (TA) 14-12, titled Temporary Shelters, can guide communities in providing clients/residents with safety and protection from exposure to the weather while simultaneously reducing the environmental impact on the community.

The intent of TA 14-12 is to assist communities in approving existing buildings or structures not necessarily designed for sleeping purposes to, on a limited basis, temporarily accommodate sleeping conditions safely. Provisionally, the time frame of 90 days within any 12-month period was to emphasize the idea that this condition must be temporary. In the spirit of applying this time frame, the intent is to house occupants for sleeping purposes during inclement weather conditions. The 90 days are not an exact number but rather a number to forecast a limited time. If the weather conditions warranted, say 99 days, because of inclement weather, that would meet the spirit and intent of the TA. Likewise, should there be less severe conditions, the shelter need not continue housing residents.

The TA also guides in determining the number of people that may safely occupy the facility and, in turn, provide safe egress in the event of an emergency. A minimum of two exits are required and the egress paths are free of obstructions at all times. Though not mandated, a building with automatic fire sprinklers may be granted flexibility for occupants sleeping on floors above the second floor and in basements. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are required and may be battery-operated.

An emergency evacuation plan coupled with a fire watch during sleeping hours provides an important level of safety for both occupants and emergency first responders. We recognize this can be a sensitive issue in communities and appreciate everyone's efforts to safely house occupants during inclement weather conditions.

# RESOLVE TO BE **FIRE SAFE** IN 2024: HOME HEATING

A new year means a new start for many. In 2024, the Oregon State Fire Marshal is asking Oregonians to resolve to be fire safe, by practicing fire safety and at home. Making a few small habit changes can better protect you and your loved ones against the threat of a fire at your home.

Home heating is the number two cause of home fires in Oregon. To reduce these numbers the OSFM offers the following tips to avoid sparking an unintended fire.

- Use heating equipment with the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- 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.
- Use newer, portable space heaters with an automatic shut-off, so they will shut off if they're tipped over. Clean them each year before using and check for product recalls.
- Unplug portable space heaters when not in use, before going to bed, or when leaving the room.
- Make sure fuel-burning heaters are designed for indoor use and are properly ventilated.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected at least once a year by a qualified professional.
- With wood stoves and fireplaces, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned pellets.
- 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.







# CELEBRATE OREGON FIRE SERVICE APPRECIATION DAY

Oregon will celebrate the Oregon Fire Service on Fire Service Appreciation Day this month!

In 2007, the Oregon Legislature passed House Joint Resolution 25. The measure designated every January 27 as Fire Service Appreciation Day in Oregon.

Fire Service Appreciation Day annually provides the opportunity to honor the men and women who unselfishly serve their communities and who strive to maintain the highest level of skill and professionalism.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal wants to thank all of you for your dedication, compassion, professionalism, and personal sacrifice to help keep all Oregonians safe where they live, work, recreate, seek medical care, and go to school.





# 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](#)

The Oregon State Fire Marshal is accepting nominations for the 2024 Golden and Silver Sparky Awards.

The Golden Sparky recognizes a fire service member or fire agency for outstanding fire prevention or public safety education achievement. The Silver Sparky recognizes a civilian or civilian agency for outstanding achievement in fire prevention or public safety education.

Nominations are open until April 1. Please submit your completed Sparky nomination form with an explanation and examples of your nominee's achievements.

To nominate someone, fill out and submit the form on the [OSFM's website](#).

## NOMINATE TODAY FOR **GOLD** AND **SILVER** SPARKY AWARD





# CODES CORNER

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS STORAGE

The goals of the hazardous materials storage requirements in the 2022 Oregon Fire Code are to protect people in and near buildings, emergency response workers, and the building itself from severe consequences from an unintended or unauthorized release of hazardous materials.

Hazardous materials can take many forms including liquids, solids, gases, and waste material. In the fire service, we generally begin our research in chapter 50 of the OFC, but much of the initial design and construction requirements can be found in chapter 4 of the 2022 Oregon Structural Specialty Code. These documents outline hazardous materials as materials that pose either a physical or health hazard, or both.

The codes limit the amount of hazardous material, called the maximum allowable quantity. The maximum allowable quantity can be increased a couple ways:

- By compartmentalizing the product, referred to in the codes as creating a control area, thus physically separating products from one another or using constructing fire barriers.
- When the material is within listed cabinets and/or when protected by an approved automatic fire sprinkler system.

Some of the risks associated when unsafe conditions which exists in storage, use open, or use closed applications include:

- **Fire and explosion risks:** Though all hazardous materials pose some risks, materials that are highly flammable or explosive when improperly stored or used can lead to fire and explosions, which can cause serious injury, death, and substantial property damage.
- **Health risks:** When hazardous materials posing a health hazard are improperly stored or used, they can pose a significant risk to human health. This can include exposure to toxic and highly toxic chemicals, gases, and fumes that can cause serious respiratory problems, skin irritations, and even death.
- **Risks to emergency responders:** When hazardous materials are released in an uncontrolled environment, it can make it more difficult for emergency responders to respond to accidents, spills, and other incidents. Exposure to hazardous substances can pose a wide range of acute and chronic health effects.
- **Environmental:** Improper storage of hazardous materials has led to leaks and spills, contaminating soil, water, and air. This can have long-lasting effects on the environment and wildlife and can harm human health.

Determining and classifying hazardous materials can be challenging because there is not one consistent definition of hazardous material. There is also not one uniform approach to the classification of hazardous materials. When looking at safety data sheets or literature from the manufacturer, it is important to know and understand which hazardous material classification system is used to handle the material safely.



# COMMUNITY RIGHT TO KNOW REPORTING PORTAL OPENS

Did you know you have a right to know? The Oregon Community Right to Know and Protection Act (ORS 453.307-414) requires Oregon employers to report their hazardous substances to OSFM including where they are stored and their hazards. The OSFM's Community Right to Know (CR2K) program tracks and maintains these records.

Information is provided to emergency planners, first responders, health professionals, and the public so measures can be taken to protect people, their property, and the environment from the risks associated with these substances.

Each year, Oregon employers are required to report their hazardous substances to the OSFM. On January 1, 2024, the OSFM's online portal for hazardous substance reporting, CHS manager, opened to submit 2023 annual reports.

The Community Right to Know and Protection Act, passed in 1985, exceeded the EPA's Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) requirements. In Oregon, a hazardous substance is any substance required to have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) per OSHA, any hazardous waste substance as defined by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), or any substance that presents a physical or health hazard to employees, first responders, or the public.

To learn more about Oregon's Community Right to Know Program (CR2K) and how to review reports, visit our [CR2K webpage](#).



# JANUARY: FIRE FIGHTER CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

At the 2023 IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial, 63% of the names added to the wall were members who had died from occupational cancer.

In partnership with the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN), the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) has designated January as Fire Fighter Cancer Awareness Month to provide firefighters the necessary tools and guidance to develop life-saving protocols for cancer prevention and to support those with a cancer diagnosis within their departments.



The IAFF has [a webpage](#) to learn about cancer and the fire service. Each week the campaign dives into a designated theme. The current year's weekly topics encompass best practices for reducing cancer risk during fireground activities, within the station, and in personal life. These include immediate calls to action, emphasizing the prevention or reduction of exposure to carcinogens and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

Learn more about the [campaign here](#).

## UPCOMING WEBINARS

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 30 – NOON TO 1 P.M.

***Elevate Your Outreach Strategies Webinar:*** Are you ready to take your organization's outreach to new heights? Join us as we learn about the groundbreaking work the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council is accomplishing with local community-based organizations. Gain insights into their innovative strategies that have proven successful in Central Oregon.

***Who should attend?*** OSFM Community Risk Reduction Grant recipients and any organization eager to enhance outreach among diverse groups and hard-to-reach communities

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14 - NOON TO 1 P.M.

***Managing Risk in Grant Projects Webinar: A Practical Approach*** This session will cover insurance requirements, documentation standards, and practical strategies to reduce risk when working with contractors and subrecipients. There will also be a focus on safe tool use and handling heavy machinery, offering specific resources and guidelines.

***Who should attend?*** Grant recipients and anyone who works with insurance

**LEARN MORE HERE**



## FROM THE **INTERNET**

Tis' the season of spreading joy, and Carlton Fire couldn't be more proud to have the opportunity to join in! Their 2023 toy drive was a huge success thanks to their volunteers. They jumped in to help bring a smile to 48 children this holiday season as volunteers drove old Engine 1 & Brush 7 through town to deliver the red bags of toys!

This year was one of our largest years for applications. [Read more about their efforts and see more pictures here.](#)

## **CAR FIRE TRAINING**

Cloverdale Fire District took to the prop car in December. The agency says they had an incredible training session as they honed their skills in safely extinguishing car fires. A huge thank you to DPPST for providing the live fire prop and expert instructors, giving our crews invaluable hands-on experience. Check out their post and [give it a like here.](#)





# CONGRATS, GRADS!

Congratulations to the five apprentices who have completed the firefighter apprenticeship academy at Klamath County Fire District #1. The graduates were honored for their work at a pinning ceremony on December 14. Oregon State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple was on hand.

The academy, which began in September, is one of two funded through Senate Bill 762. The goal of the programs is to add pathways into a career in the Oregon fire service. Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue in The Dalles received funding this year as well for their apprenticeship program.



## Contact Us

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

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