



OREGON OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THE GATED WYE

MAY 2023



OREGON FOCUSED ON WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH IN MAY

May means warmer weather and summer around the corner. May is also designated as Wildfire Awareness Month in Oregon.

The OSFM and other state agencies and partners are asking Oregonians to take this month to prepare for wildfire and focus on things like creating defensible space and brushing up on fire prevention tips.

[READ MORE ON PG. 2](#)

OSFM'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wildfire Awareness • P.02

Defensible Space Tips • P.03

2023 Staffing Grant • P.05

Immediate Response • P.06

Codes Corner • P.08

Oregon Ag Fest • P.09

Finds on the Internet • P.11

Contact Us • P.15



WELCOME TO WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH

During the month of May, Oregonians, visitors, and communities across the state are encouraged to take action to be prepared for wildfire.

Each week, state agencies will share information about how to prevent and prepare for wildfires. The Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and partner agencies launched a campaign to spark action and help cut down on human-caused fires.

Over the last few years, Oregon has experienced an increase in wildfire activity across the state. These wildfires have increasingly burned through communities, upending lives and changing the landscape for decades to come.

The OSFM and its partners are taking part in Wildfire Awareness Month to prepare Oregonians. Below is a calendar of weekly topics.

- **Week 1:** OSFM - defensible space
- **Week 2:** ODF - escaped debris burning (#1 wildfire issue statewide)
- **Week 3:** ODOT - vehicle fires (leading source of wildfires each summer)
- **Week 4:** PNWCG and KOG - recreational campfires ahead of Memorial Day (#3 wildfire issue during fire season)
- **Week 5:** OEM - evacuation levels and evacuation preparations prior to fire season

The OSFM created a [social media kit](#) for the fire service and partners to share throughout May.

CREATE DEFENSIBLE SPACE AHEAD OF WILDFIRE SEASON

Defensible space can prevent embers from igniting a home. It can also prevent flames from reaching a home altogether. Oregonians can protect their home and community from wildfire with some simple steps. A key to defensible space is to keep it defined; keep grass and weeds cut low and always be prepared to respond to wildfire.

The OSFM urges everyone to look around their property. Look for areas where glowing embers could ignite spot fires, especially around vulnerable areas like decks, patios, and fences that can spread flames to your home. The most significant risk of buildings catching on fire during a wildfire is the advancing ember shower that can reach your property long before an actual flame front.

“Wildfire safety starts with all of us and our property. Now is a good time to take action to prepare our homes, families, and communities for wildfires by starting on our property before there is smoke on the horizon,” Oregon State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple said.

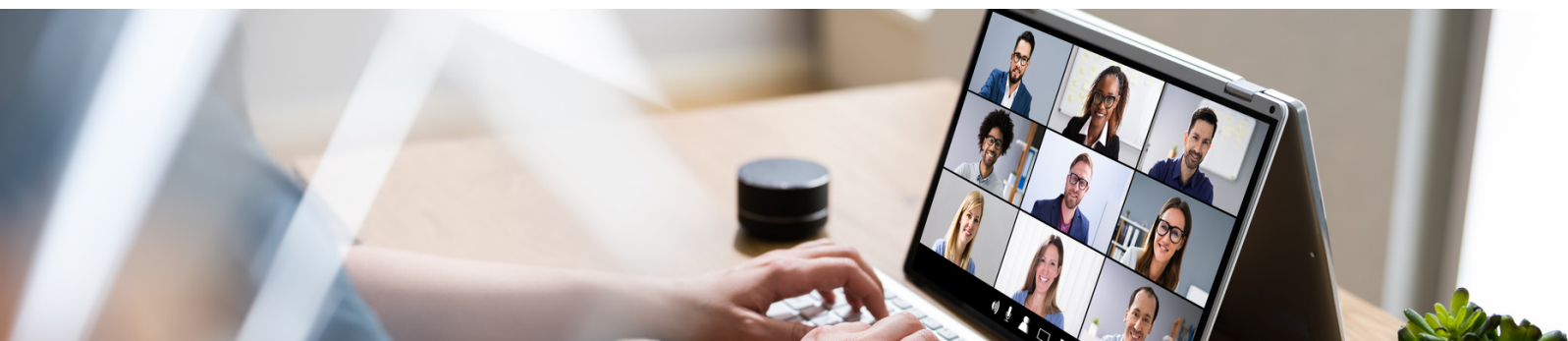
While defensible space at the individual home offers protection, communities can be better protected when every home in the area creates defensible space. This significantly increases the chance of more homes surviving a wildfire event.



DEFENSIBLE SPACE TIPS

To address wildfire risk, the Oregon State Fire Marshal recommends the following steps people can take right now to help protect themselves against the upcoming fire season:

- Clear roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris, and pine needles.
- Ensure your roof is in good condition.
- Move any flammable material away from exterior walls, i.e., mulch, flammable plants, leaves and needles, and firewood piles.
- Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
- Give your home a non-combustible area where a fire in the landscape can't reach your home.
- Keep lawns and native grasses mowed during high fire danger conditions.
- Remove ladder fuels (vegetation under trees) so a surface fire cannot reach the crowns.



OSFM HOSTING A SERIES OF WILDFIRE WEBINARS

With May being Wildfire Awareness Month in Oregon, our agency is hosting weekly webinars on several topics including creating defensible space, emergency preparedness, home hardening, and more.

These webinars are a part of the OSFM's Fire Adapted Oregon initiative and are focused on preparing Oregonians for wildfire. Our fire risk reduction specialists are working with our partners and experts in their fields to provide these educational opportunities.

We would like to thank our partners in advance who have helped to make these educational webinars possible and our presenters who will be sharing their expertise! We look forward to seeing you at these webinars this May as we all work to be better prepared for wildfire. Learn more about the webinars and sign up [here](#).

OLST TALKS CRR AT APRIL MEETING

The Oregon Life Safety Team (OLST) met in April to learn about community risk reduction and how to move fire prevention and education forward in Oregon.

The OSFM brought in guest speaker, Karen Berard-Reed from the NFPA, to talk about community risk reduction. Karen was also on hand for an all-day CRR training at Keizer Fire.

She tailored this training specifically to Oregon to include how the fire service can use CRR at both the state and local levels.

For more information about OLST, check out the [OLST section on our webpage](#).



APPLY FOR THE 2023 WILDFIRE SEASON STAFFING GRANT

The Oregon State Fire Marshal announced the return of the wildfire season staffing grant. Last summer, this grant played a pivotal role in the 2022 wildfire season. The OSFM was able to issue grants to 179 local fire agencies, which allowed them to hire additional staff.

This funding not only improved wildfire response but provided additional capacity to local fire agencies to respond to other calls, improving response times and ultimately saving lives.

On April 21, we announced the 2023 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant application period is open through May 19, 2023. The program is allocated \$6 million in funding. Local fire agencies with a valid FDID and tribal fire agencies are eligible to apply.

Local fire agencies can apply for up to \$35,000 to hire additional seasonal firefighters using the current district or department staffing model and pay scale.

Priority will be given to local fire agencies whose annual property tax income is less than \$2 million. This information can be found at your tax assessor's office. This is not the annual operating budget, capital outlay budget, funding received from any grants, or reserve accounts. For city departments, it's the total property tax income received by the fire department from the city.

Agencies with an annual property tax income exceeding \$2 million are eligible. These applications will be reviewed after the application period closes on May 19, 2023; grant selections will be made based on the remaining funds.

If you are interested in learning more about the grant, be sure to check out our [grants page](#).





FIREFIGHTERS BATTLE FIRE IN DOWNTOWN JOHN DAY

The Oregon State Fire Marshal mobilized a dozen firefighters from Central Oregon through Immediate Response to help with a larger fire in downtown John Day in April.

Crews and engines from Bend, Sunriver, Redmond, and Jefferson County Fire District 1 responded to Grant County, about 150 miles east, to relieve local crews. Firefighters from John Day, Canyon City, and Prairie City immediately responded to the fire, which was reported shortly before 6 p.m. on April 17 at DP Home Entertainment. Firefighters successfully contained the fire around 11 p.m. and were provided overnight relief by the crews from central Oregon, who held the line and mopped up hot spots within the interior.

Through Immediate Response, the OSFM has the ability to surge capacity to an incident like a fire or other event through the Oregon Fire Mutual Aid System. In 2022, the OSFM mobilized resources to 12 Immediate Response assignments.

QUICK ACTION HELPS STOP SALEM FIRE



Marion County firefighters were dispatched to Target on Center Street in Salem in mid-April for a reported commercial structure fire.

Firefighters Aaron Covington, Sam Stobie, and Lew Owens were the first on scene. Fortunately, Jordyn Ybarra, a Target employee, noticed the fire and responded quickly with a portable fire extinguisher.

Firefighters credit Ybarra with extinguishing the fire before it spread further.

"Times like these are great examples of how proper fire safety measures and proper fire extinguisher training can prevent significant damage or loss of life or property from occurring. The cause of the fire is under investigation," Covington said.

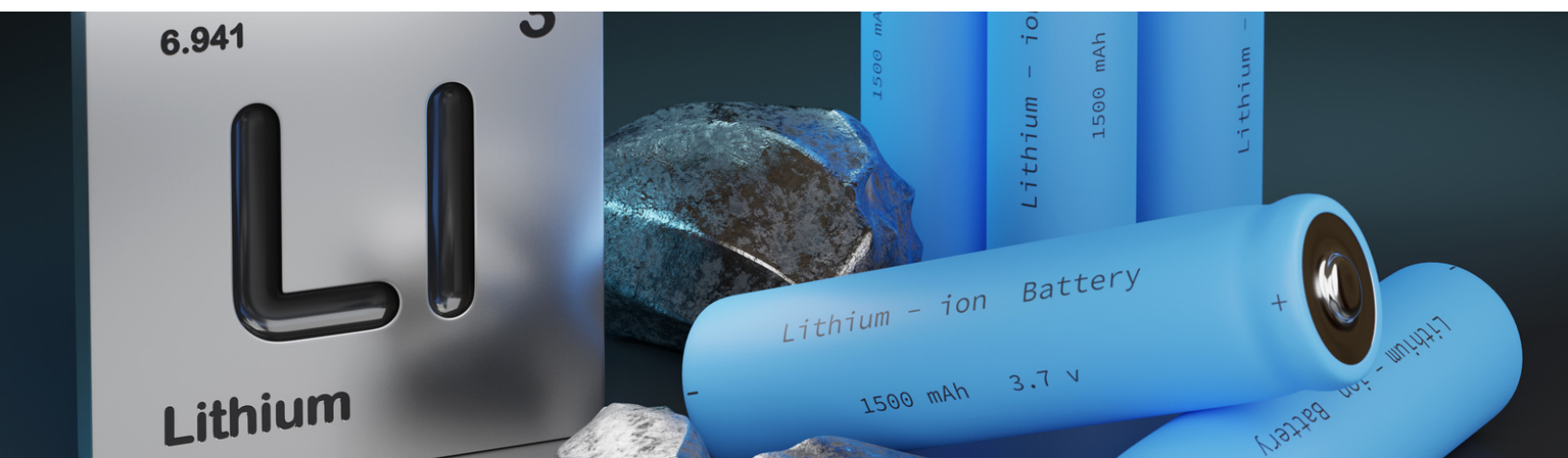
HERMISTON HOSTS FIRE INVESTIGATORS COURSE

Flames, firefighters, and fire investigations were the name of the game in Hermiston in April. The OSFM hosted a fire investigators class on April 17-21 to teach students how to determine the origin and cause of a fire.

Fire investigation is a complex and methodical process. Home fires can be caused by a variety of things. Each fire leaves behind clues about how and where it started. It is important for a fire investigator to possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities when accurately determining the origin and cause of a fire. Developing this expertise is important for thorough fire investigations.

As part of the class, the teaching cadre set controlled fires in a donated house for the students to investigate. At the end of class, the house was burned. Thanks to Umatilla County Fire District 1 for the great photos.





CODES CORNER

LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES IN FOCUS

Firefighters contained an intense fire involving lithium-ion batteries in a Tualatin warehouse, helped in part by the sprinkler system activating before they arrived. Neighboring businesses were evacuated as the hazmat team was called to monitor air quality, contain water runoff, and decontaminate the fire crews.

Fires involving lithium-ion batteries are on the rise in Oregon. Recent fires resulted in heavy damage to buildings in Powell Butte and Medford and led to injuries in Hillsboro. Elsewhere, a 2019 lithium-ion fire and explosion in Arizona resulted in eight firefighter injuries, one of them critical.

The 2022 Oregon Fire Code addresses hazards associated with the high-piled storage of this battery technology. Lithium-ion batteries are classified as a high-hazard commodity and must meet fire and safety requirements. Depending on the volume and storage of these batteries, the area may be required to have automatic sprinklers, fire detection, access doors for firefighters, and Section 910-compliant smoke and heat removal.

A design professional would use NFPA 13 to determine the fire sprinkler density. Very high storage, typically greater than 25 feet, may require ESFR or “in rack” sprinklers.

Fire protection requirements are classified into two general groups:

- Classes I-IV, when the top of the storage is greater than 12 feet
- High-hazard commodities, which include lithium-ion batteries, are considered “high-piled” when the top of the storage is six feet above the floor

Classification is not based solely on the commodity; it may be increased depending on the packaging material, the container, or the pallets they sit on. Lithium-ion batteries burn vigorously and release high rates of heat. They are used in products stored in warehouses and mercantile storerooms across the state. Identifying these products and ensuring they are protected in accordance with the Oregon Fire Code is key to saving property, the environment, and lives.



OSFM, PARTNERS HOST INTERACTIVE BOOTH AT OREGON AG FEST

Teamwork and partnership led to success at the Oregon Ag Fest in Salem in April. The OSFM and several other partner agencies staffed an interactive booth to teach kids and parents the importance of home fire safety and wildfire preparedness. The booth included partners from Salem Fire, Marion County Fire District #1, the Chemeketa Fire program, West Salem High School Emergency Service program, Southwest Polk Fire, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Turner Fire, First Response Therapy Dogs, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.

Families were able to check out the equipment. Also, part of the experience was a junior firefighter challenge for kids to see what it's like to be a firefighter. OSFM staff and our partners were able to emphasize with parents and families the importance of working smoke alarms, home fire escape planning, and cooking fire safety.



LEPC CONFERENCE HELD IN REDMOND

Last month, approximately 60 people attended the Local Emergency Planning Committee conference in Deschutes County. The group represented public sector and private industries from around the state.

Conference speakers emphasized the progress made in emergency preparedness over the last few decades and recommended ways to continue improving. Keynote speaker Ruby Dawn Manning, a hazmat instructor at the FEMA Center for Domestic Preparedness spoke about the need for continued training and development and the value of sharing experiences with other responders.

The OSFM's Todd Raska gave several presentations and hands-on lessons on using the Community Right to Know database maintained by the OSFM. The database collects reports from facilities and allows professionals and the public to learn about hazards in their communities.

The OSFM's Terry Wolfe, a fixture in local emergency planning, was honored at the conference by Chief Deputy Travis Madema. Wolf has 28 years of service to the OSFM and 43 years of service with the state of Oregon and is planning to retire this coming winter.



NEW MOBILIZATION PLAN RELEASED

At the Oregon Fire Defense Board meeting in April, the 2023 Oregon Fire Service Mobilization Plan was approved.

The plan establishes operating procedures for the most practical use of state resources during all-hazard emergencies beyond the capabilities of local resources. The plan assumes fire departments and districts have mutual aid agreements to respond to local emergencies.

Some significant changes for 2023 include increased reimbursement rates for some apparatus and volunteer firefighters.

Thank you to the 2023 Oregon Fire Service Mobilization Plan committee: Co-Chairs Roger Johnson & Ian Yocum, Greg Davis, Scott Goff, Mike Hussey, Chad Minter, and Mariah Rawlins. A big thank you to the committee for providing valuable input.

The 2023 Oregon Fire Service Mobilization Plan will be posted on the [OSFM's website](#). Hard copies can be ordered by [filling out this form](#).



FROM THE INTERNET: TO THE TOWER

From the top rope, errr...training tower! Firefighters in North Bend grabbed the ropes, pullies, and harnesses for a little ropes training in April. The agency posted this was part of a two-part training. Important skills to have! The real trick...don't look down. 😊

SEE THE POST

FROM THE INTERNET: ARFF TRAINING

Jefferson County Fire District 1 tested and trained their skills in April. The agency hosted an aircraft rescue and firefighting training. The event was put on in part with the Central Oregon Fire Instructor's Association and the Industrial Emergency Council.

SEE THE POST HERE.



WELCOME TO THE OSFM TEAM



MATT AMOS: STRATEGIC PLANNING DSFM

Matt previously worked for Clackamas County Fire District for 14 years as a fire investigator and fire code inspector. Matt served in the Marine Corps as a nuclear, biological, and chemical defense specialist.

Matt has a bachelor's degree in fire and emergency management.

JEANINE GIBEAUT: ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN

Jeanine is a lifelong Oregonian, having lived in the Willamette Valley, Central Oregon, and Eastern Oregon. She has almost 10 years of state experience, including working as a payroll tech at the Oregon Department of Justice and Oregon Military Department. In her free time, she enjoys road trips to the mountains and beach, hiking, landscape photography, crime dramas, and spoiling her two nephews.



HANNA CRUZEN: ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN

Hanna finished her bachelor's degree in finance this past month at Oregon State University in Corvallis. She spends her free time 3D printing, staying up to date on international financial news, and acting as an alumna of her sorority, Phi Sigma Rho. Born and raised in Salem, Hanna looks forward to continuing to serve the city and state through her new role.

GEORGE NAUGHTON: FINANCE

George joined the OSFM on a rotation agreement with the Department of Administrative Services. George was the previous state chief financial officer for more than 16 years. He will be assisting the OSFM with executive leadership, financial transition, and financial strategic planning as the OSFM works to become a standalone stage agency on July 1, 2023.



JEREMY PETERSEN: APPLICATION ARCHITECT

For the past 3.5 years, Jeremy worked at the Department of Energy as a senior application developer. He worked to build an online portal to allow recent wildfire victims to apply for assistance rebuilding or replacing their homes with energy efficiency. Jeremy also spent 25 years working in the private sector in IT for a local aviation fuel company. Jeremy and his wife have two children and one granddaughter they love to spoil.

WELCOME TO THE OSFM TEAM



ALLAN BATES: APPLICATION ADMINISTRATOR

Allan spent the last nearly 21 years with the Oregon Department of Energy in various positions, the last several in application administration and development. He is from the Salem area. In his time outside of work, he volunteers in the community and enjoys helping the aging population of Dallas use, learn, and resolve issues with technology.

DIKSHANT PATEL: DATA APPLICATION ARCHITECT

Dikshant previously worked with the Oregon Department of Transportation for 11 years before moving to the private sector. For the last six years, Dikshant worked for Trimble Incorporated as a senior software engineer. He has a master's degree in applied computer sciences. Dikshant lives with his wife, two sons, and his parents. He and his family have been in Oregon for 19 years now and loved Oregon so much they made it their permanent home.



ERIC LAMPERT: SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR

Eric has a bachelor's degree in computer information systems and has been with the state of Oregon for 13.5 years. Eric comes to the OSFM from the Department of Energy where he was on the IT team. He enjoys traveling and recreating and has lived all over Oregon. Eric and his wife have three children ages six, four, and 16 months.

MICHELLE SLAY: GRANTS COORDINATOR

For the past 16 years, Michelle served in many positions at a community college. Her last role was as a financial aid advisor for seven years, delivering federal, state, and institutional aid to thousands of students. Most recently, Michelle served as a grant coordinator with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. She has a bachelor's degree in business and a master's degree in higher education. Michelle lives with her spouse, two teenagers, and a beagle/border collie.



ERIC GEMMIL: ANALYTICS AND INTELLIGENCE UNIT MANAGER

Eric has worked for the Oregon State Police as a business and operations analyst since 2006. He works to make data easily accessible, meaningful, accurate, reliable, and useful. Prior to being a state employee, Eric worked at the Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, California as an administrative supervisor. He has a certification in social/behavioral research and a Doctor of Management.



DENNIS LEE: EMERGENCY RESPONSE UNIT MANAGER

Dennis comes to the OSFM after 23 years at the Oregon Department of Forestry. For the last several years, he served as the district forester of the Klamath-Lake District. He is passionate about fire and emergency response. Dennis has two kids, Tristan, 20, and Mada, 15. In his spare time, he enjoys watching his daughter's sports and spending time in the woods, on a river, or on a beach with his family and friends.

HEATHER WYLAND: PROCUREMENT

Heather was born in Grants Pass, and after serving two tours in the Air Force, returned to Oregon where she has lived ever since. She is married and has two adult children and three grandchildren. She likes to travel, enjoys nature, and has two furry babies (dogs). Heather has a colorful career and has been in contracts and procurement for nearly 25 years. She is excited to join the OSFM.



OSFM CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

[Deputy State Fire Marshal \(Regional\)](#)

[Deputy State Fire Marshal \(District\)](#)

[System Architect - Lead Work](#)

[Hazmat Program Coordinator](#)





Contact Us

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

Alison Green, public affairs director

Alison.Green@osp.oregon.gov

Kassie Keller, public affairs specialist

Kassondra.Keller@osp.oregon.gov

John Hendricks, public affairs specialist

Johnathan.Hendricks@osp.oregon.gov

Follow Us



[The OSFM on Twitter](#)



[The OSFM on Facebook](#)



[The OSFM on Instagram](#)

