



OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

# THE GATED WYE

## AUGUST 2025



## RESPONDING TO WILDFIRE

Wildfires in July kept Oregon firefighters busy across the state. The largest, the Cram Fire, burned more than 95,000 acres before it was contained.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal saw a quick response thanks to the 2025 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant and equipment provided through the OSFM Engine Program.

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### OSFM'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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# WILDFIRES KEEP FIREFIGHTERS BUSY ACROSS OREGON

The Oregon State Fire Marshal mobilized hundreds of firefighters and multiple incident management teams in July as wildfire activity increased across the state.

The agency responded to several fast-moving fires, using both Immediate Response and the Emergency Conflagration Act to support local fire agencies. Four conflagrations were invoked by Governor Tina Kotek during the month, allowing the Oregon State Fire Marshal to deploy structural protection resources to fires in Crook, Klamath, Umatilla, and Jefferson counties.

Among the largest incidents was the Cram Fire, which burned more than 95,000 acres in Jefferson and Wasco counties. The state fire marshal deployed its Green Incident Management Team, 14 structural task forces, and two strike teams. This was the largest mobilization so far in 2025. The fire reached 73% containment by July 21.

Other notable responses included the Elk Fire in Klamath County, Cold Springs Fire in Umatilla County, and Highland Fire in Crook County. Task forces were also sent to Southern Oregon and Josephine and Jackson counties through Immediate Response to assist with lightning-related fire activity.

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"This has been a very active fire month, and our teams have responded quickly to support communities under threat," said State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple. "We appreciate the hard work of Oregon's fire service and ask everyone to stay wildfire aware as conditions remain dry."

The state fire marshal also mobilized air support through agreements with the Oregon Department of Forestry to a fire off Turner Road near Salem in Marion County. This was done through Immediate Response.

In July, the Oregon State Fire Marshal mobilized 23 structural task forces and two strike teams.

On July 16, Governor Kotek also issued a State of Emergency through the end of the year, citing the escalating wildfire threat and authorizing additional state resources to assist with response efforts across Oregon.

The move by the governor allows the state fire marshal access to more resources to respond to wildfires. It also gives the ability to bring in firefighters and equipment from other states as well as working with other state agencies for help.

For wildfire updates, visit the Oregon State Fire Marshal incident information blog, [osfminfo.org](https://osfminfo.org).





# FIRELINE PHOTOS





# WILDFIRE STAFFING GRANT CONTINUES TO SEE SUCCESS

Local fire agencies across Oregon are reporting faster response times, improved staffing, and stronger mutual aid thanks to the Oregon State Fire Marshal's 2025 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant.

Now in its fourth year, the seasonal staffing grant has allowed local agencies to hire extra personnel, expand shift coverage, and respond more effectively to wildfires during peak fire season. The grant supports efforts to keep fires small and communities safe while allowing departments to provide mutual aid without compromising coverage at home.

In Lane County, Coburg Fire District responded with a Type 6 engine provided by the state fire marshal to a brush fire north of Eugene. One of the firefighters assigned to the unit was grant funded.

In Douglas County, the Camas Valley Fire District credited the grant with having firefighters stationed and ready to respond immediately to a small grass fire on Main Camas Road on July 10. Units were on scene within six minutes and quickly contained the fire to one-eighth of an acre.

"Our firefighters were already at the fire station and were able to respond quickly to keep the fire small," the department said.

In Clackamas County, the Estacada Fire District deployed personnel to Central Oregon to assist with the Highland and Cram fires. Firefighter Harrison Wright, part of the crew assigned to the incident, was hired through the Oregon State Fire Marshal's seasonal grant program.

The Clatsop County Task Force, including firefighters from Astoria, Seaside, Warrenton, Lewis & Clark, and Cannon Beach, were assigned to the Elk Fire. According to fire officials, the staffing grant has made it possible to both respond to regional fire activity and maintain coverage in their home communities.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal's wildfire season staffing grant is part of a broader strategy to strengthen wildfire preparedness across the state, reduce initial attack response times, and build resilient fire service capacity.







# ENGINE PROGRAM BOOSTS CAPACITY

Fire agencies across Oregon are putting new apparatus from the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Engine Program to good use, reinforcing the program's value in supporting local response during wildfire season.

The Keno Rural Fire Protection District reported two deployments in its first week of operating a newly assigned Type 3 engine. The first incident involved a fire straddling the Oregon-California border, requiring support from multiple agencies including the Oregon Department of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Cal Fire. The rugged terrain required the engine's high-clearance chassis to access the scene.



A second response involved an unattended bonfire on Hamaker Mountain Road in a restricted-use area. Crews used the engine's auxiliary pump and hose reel to extinguish the fire, and exterior lighting provided safe visibility during early morning operations.

Lane Fire Authority placed its Type 3 engine into service on July 3, and within hours, it responded to roadside fires in coordination with the Oregon Department of Forestry.

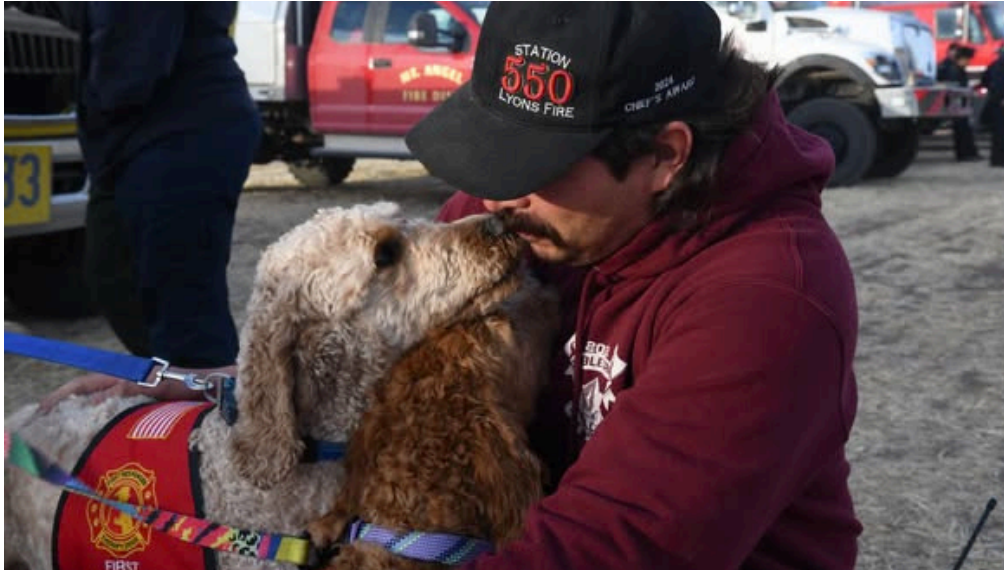
The OSFM Engine Program provides wildfire engines to local fire agencies throughout Oregon to enhance initial response capacity, improve firefighter safety, and strengthen regional and statewide mutual aid.



# SPECIAL VISITORS TO FIRE CAMP

On July 20, the Cram Fire camp had a morale boost thanks to a pair of amazing First Responder Therapy Dogs and their owner Mike! Scout is a certified therapy dog, and his sidekick Piper is a seven-month-old golden doodle in training. Mike is passionate about outreach and support to the firefighting community; his visit is 100% volunteer and very much appreciated.

These four-legged heroes made a special visit to support the hardworking firefighters and incident personnel who've been giving their all on the frontlines. Amidst the long shifts, smoky skies, and intense heat, these pups brought calm, comfort, and a few much-needed smiles.



# HEATHER MILLER HONORED



The Oregon State Fire Marshal would like to congratulate Fire Risk Reduction Specialist Heather Miller who was recognized by Project Wildfire at their annual BBQ with their agency award, now in its second year.

Nominated by members of the Project Wildfire Steering Committee and Neighborhood Coalition, Heather was honored for her leadership, innovation, and dedication to wildfire preparedness.

As shared during the award presentation:  
"She consistently goes above and beyond to help protect lives, property, and natural resources from wildfire."

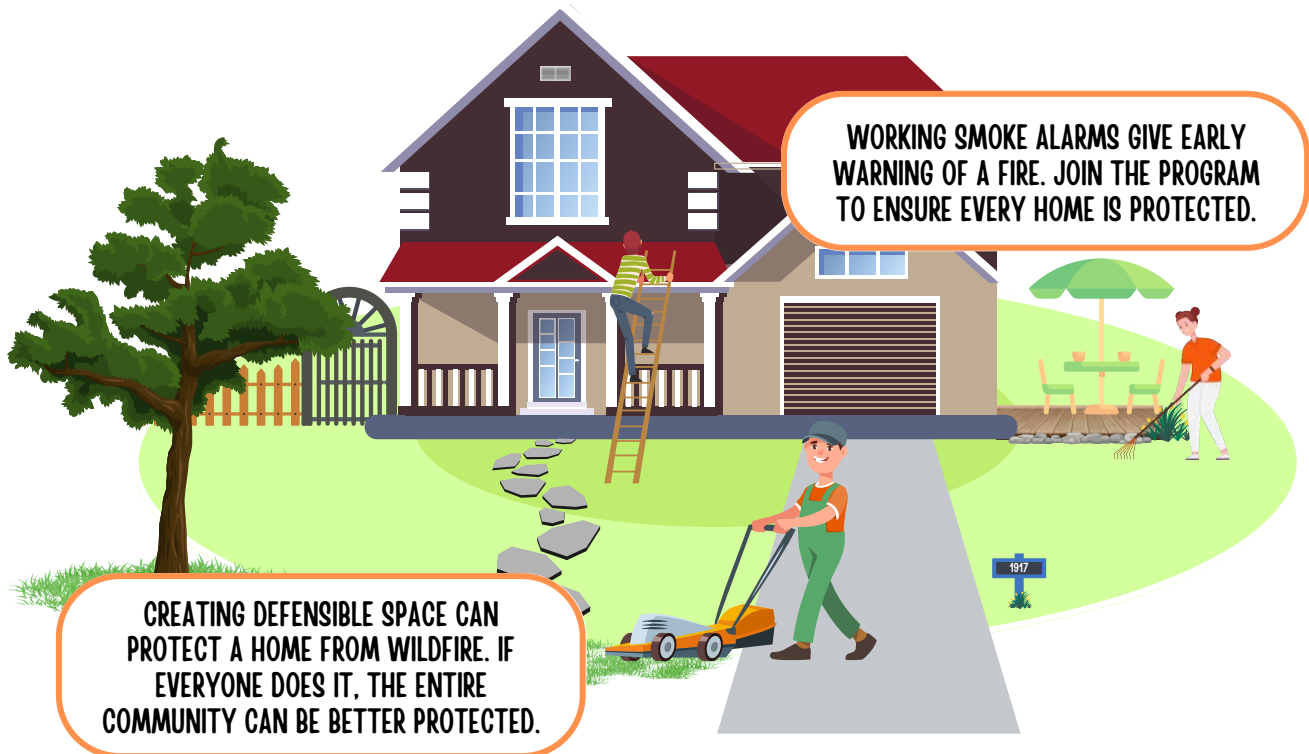


# PROTECT HOMES IN YOUR COMMUNITY INSIDE AND OUT

From home fires to wildfires, the Oregon State Fire Marshal offers essential programs to help you protect your community year-round.

Your agency can:

- Become a **defensible space assessor** to help homes withstand wildfire
- Participate in the **Smoke Alarm Installation Program** to protect the people inside



SCAN



*Defensible Space Program*

SCAN



*Smoke Alarm Installation Program*

Empower your agency to enhance fire safety—inside and out.

## GET STARTED TODAY!





## 2025 SPARKY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The Oregon State Fire Marshal announced the recipients of the 2025 Golden and Silver Sparky Awards, the agency's highest honors recognizing outstanding contributions to fire prevention and public safety education.

The Golden Sparky Award, which honors a member of the fire service for exceptional dedication to fire prevention, was awarded to Charlie Lesiecki, a volunteer firefighter and safety committee chair at Central Oregon Coast Fire & Rescue.

Lesiecki has played a vital role in enhancing safety in his community by partnering with local businesses to ensure fire code and OSHA compliance, distributing fire prevention materials, and advising residents on defensible space practices. In collaboration with the American Red Cross, he has also installed smoke alarms in community members' homes. Lesiecki also serves on the county's technical rescue team.

State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple presented the award during a ceremony at Central Oregon Coast Fire & Rescue on July 7.

The Silver Sparky Award, which recognizes a civilian or civilian agency, was presented to the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District Fire Corps, a team of nearly 50 volunteers committed to community risk reduction.

In the past year alone, the Fire Corps has trained 171 people in lifesaving skills, completed 82 smoke alarm installations, conducted 170 home assessments for wildfire risk, and provided critical support during emergencies.

Ruiz-Temple presented the Silver Sparky Award at the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District on July 8.







# IN MEMORIAM

## TED MEGERT REMEMBERED

The Oregon fire service community is mourning the loss of retired Deputy State Fire Marshal Ted Megert, who passed away recently after a distinguished career in public safety spanning more than five decades.

Megert served with the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office from 1995 to 2017, with a brief break in service. Prior to joining the OSFM, he spent nearly 30 years with Portland Fire from 1961 to 1990. His career in service began even earlier with honorable duty in the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Ted was a man of quiet strength, kindness, and deep knowledge," State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple said. "Whether mentoring colleagues or representing the agency during conflagrations, Ted brought calm leadership, thoughtful guidance, and a gentle smile that often carried a bit of well-timed humor."

Known for his purposeful service and steady presence, Megert earned the respect and admiration of fire professionals across Oregon.

## VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Izaiah Adams of Crescent Rural Fire Protection District has been named the 2025 Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association Volunteer of the Year.

A resident student volunteer, Adams was recognized for his strong work ethic, positive attitude, and dedication to both training and emergency response. He is certified as a firefighter I, EMT-basic, and driver operator, and is pursuing a fire science degree at Central Oregon Community College.

Adams staffs the station regularly, attends all drills and community events, and serves as the department's safety committee chair. Known for his professionalism in patient care, he is a respected and valued member of the team.

He received the award at the OVFA's annual conference.





# BUTTE FALLS TO HONOR 2020 FIRST RESPONDERS

Butte Falls Volunteer Fire and Rescue will host its annual Firemen's BBQ on Saturday, August 9, 2025, at 11 a.m. in Butte Falls, with this year's event holding special significance.

The community gathering will honor first responders and commemorate the fifth anniversary of the devastating Almeda and Obenchain fires that swept through Jackson County in 2020. The event will feature live music from The Torpedoes, dancing, games, bingo, and a classic BBQ spread, including tri-tip, chicken, Chief Jeff Gorman's signature baked beans, sides, dessert, and drinks for \$17.

The fundraiser supports the department's efforts to purchase a much-needed Type 3 wildfire engine.

For more information or to support Butte Falls Volunteer Fire and Rescue, contact the department directly.



## JOIN US AT THE STATE FAIR!



The Oregon State Fire Marshal will be at the Oregon State Fair again this year, Aug. 22 to Sept. 1, 2025. Once again, we will be part of the Natural Resource area, where we will connect with fairgoers and partner agencies, and raise awareness about wildfire prevention, defensible space, and home fire safety. This year's exhibit will feature the hardened home used during the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) Demo Burn on June 25.

If you are an Oregon State Fire Marshal employee and would like to volunteer to support this year's exhibit, please contact Sara Jasmin at 503-509-2518 or [Sara.Jasmin@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:Sara.Jasmin@osfm.oregon.gov).



# OSFM HOSTING FREE BATTERY RESPONSE TRAINING

The Oregon State Fire Marshal is encouraging members of the Oregon fire service to register for a free, hands-on training opportunity focused on risk-based response to battery emergencies.

The 8-hour course, which includes both classroom and practical instruction, is designed to prepare firefighters and other emergency responders to safely handle battery-related incidents involving multiple battery types, including lithium-ion (Li-Ion) batteries. Scenarios will cover transportation settings — such as passenger vehicles and cargo shipments by ground, air, and sea — and residential, commercial, and industrial environments.

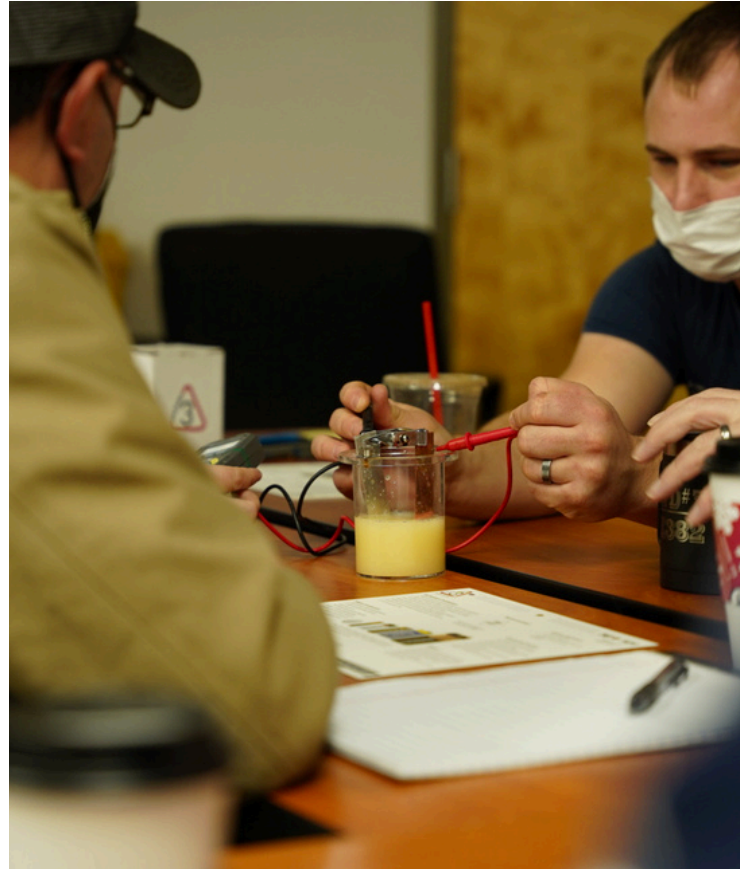
The training is open to all emergency responders, though firefighters are especially encouraged to enroll. It is recommended that participants have HAZMAT operations-level training or higher before attending.

There is no cost to participate. Registration, travel, lodging, and per diem expenses will be covered by the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) grant.

Space is limited to 30 participants per class. Registration is open now through Sept. 12, 2025, at 5 p.m. Click the links below to register.

- [Sept. 17 – Eugene Springfield Fire, Eugene](#)
- [Sept. 18 – Bend Fire & Rescue, Bend](#)
- [Sept. 19 – Portland Fire & Rescue, Portland](#)
- [Sept. 20 – Clatsop Community College, Astoria](#)

For more information, contact OSFM Training Specialist Rick Heuchert at 503-983-3860 or [richard.heuchert@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:richard.heuchert@osfm.oregon.gov).





# FIRE PREVENTION MONTH APPROACHING

October is Fire Prevention Month, and the Oregon State Fire Marshal invites you to join us in celebrating fire safety. Our focus this year is on rechargeable battery safety. This October, we encourage you to “Take Charge of Fire Safety!” This campaign is an extension of the National Fire Protection Association’s Fire Prevention Week, which highlights this year’s theme, “Charge into Fire Safety™: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home.”

Here are some tips to keep your home safe:

- **Buy only certified products.** When buying a product that uses a rechargeable battery, look for a safety certification mark such as UL, ETL, or CSA. This means it meets important safety standards.
- **Charge devices safely.** Always use the cords that came with the product to charge. Follow the instructions from the manufacturer. Buy new chargers from the manufacturer or one that the manufacturer has approved. Charge your device on a hard surface. Don’t overcharge your device. Unplug it or remove the battery when it’s fully charged.
- **Recycle batteries responsibly.** Don’t throw rechargeable batteries in the trash or regular recycling bins because they could start a fire. Recycle your device or battery at a safe battery recycling location. Visit [call2recycle.org](https://call2recycle.org) to find a recycling spot near you.

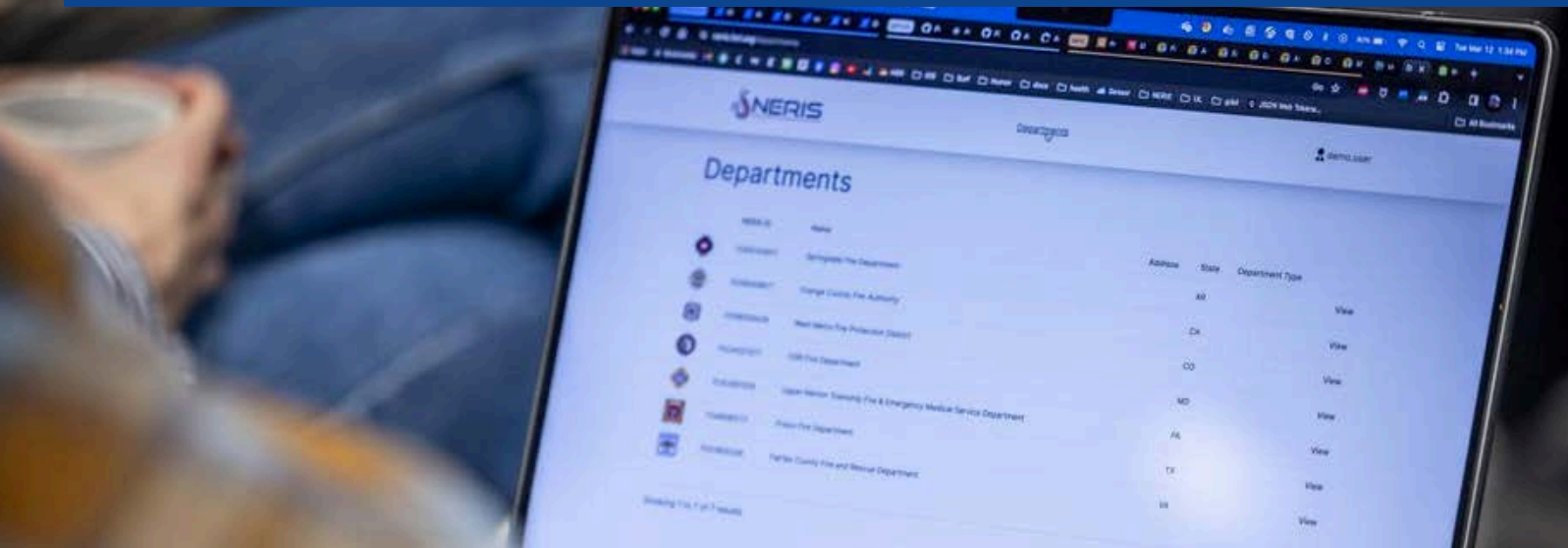
Oregon State Fire Marshal’s Fire Prevention Education Unit is here to help you celebrate Fire Prevention Month by spreading the word about fire safety. Scan the QR code to request a Fire Prevention Month box that contains everything you need to help educate your community.

Stay tuned to the Oregon State Fire Marshal on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn where we will be posting fire safety messages all month about rechargeable battery safety.

Fire Prevention Month is the perfect time to remind everyone to plan, prepare, and prevent fires in their homes. Let’s work together to make our communities safer.







# OREGON NERIS+ UPDATE

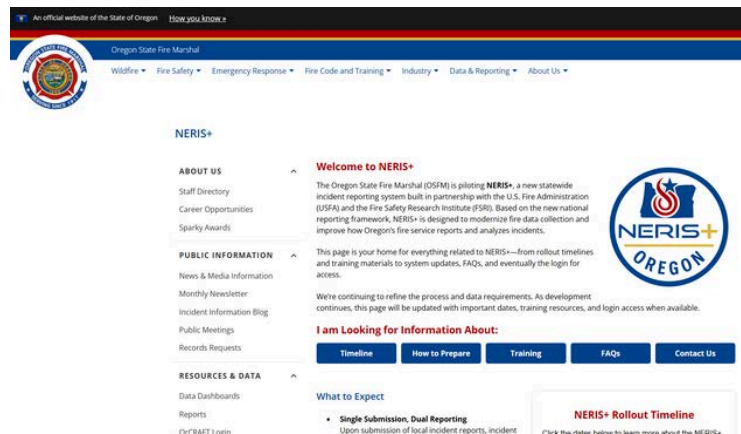
After months of preparation, we are planning to kick off the transition from NFIRS to the new NERIS platform for Oregon fire agencies. This milestone is a significant stride toward strengthening Oregon's fire data infrastructure. The first step will be to update your agency information in the Oregon repository. More specifically, agencies will need to:

- Log into the Oregon fire incident repository.
- Update agency locations (resources menu).
- Confirm your agency information under the agency administration menu—ensure both the details and NERIS tabs are accurate.

Training videos, FAQs, and other resources to help guide you through this process will be available on the [NERIS+ webpage](#).

Need help? Reach out to Michelle Vold at [michelle.vold@osfm.oregon.gov](mailto:michelle.vold@osfm.oregon.gov) with any questions. Once your updates are complete, please notify Michelle by email.

Together, we're building a more unified and resilient fire reporting system for Oregon.



Be sure to check out the [NERIS+ webpage](#)







## ORGANIC COATINGS FINALLY EXPLAINED

A fatal explosion at a solvent-based paint manufacturing plant in Ohio took the life of a worker in 2021. Just two years later, a fire tore through a Sherwin-Williams facility in Texas, causing significant structural damage. More recently, a similar fire in Illinois led to major losses and left two workers seriously injured. These events all involved operations that fall under the scope of Chapter 29 of the Oregon Fire Code - though in many jurisdictions, that chapter remains largely underused due to confusion over what exactly it means.

The chapter is titled “Manufacture of Organic Coatings,” and while most fire inspectors are familiar with what a coating is, the term “organic” often causes hesitation. In everyday language, “organic” recalls food labels or eco-friendly materials. But in the context of fire and building codes, organic refers to carbon-based substances—typically those that burn easily. Simply put then, organic coatings are flammable or combustible paints, varnishes, lacquers, enamels, and similar products which are already familiar to us.

Chapter 29 deals with the safety practices related to the manufacturing of these materials. When they’re being applied, the relevant requirements are found in Chapter 24, Flammable Finishes, which covers flammable finishes. Once they’ve been produced and stored, inspectors look to Chapter 57, Flammable and Combustible Liquids. But when coatings are actively being mixed, heated, and processed, Chapter 29 is where you’ll find the fire and life safety provisions. Although the title does not explicitly state that the chapter is limited to flammable and combustible products, it is inferred by its scope and made clear by its definition in Chapter 2.

Inspectors should also be aware of an exception in Section 5705.1 of the code, which excludes from certain requirements those organic coatings that meet a very narrow set of conditions. Specifically, the exception applies to coatings that are stored in containers, have no measurable fire point, and are simply awaiting pigmentation. If any one of these factors is not met, the full requirements for dispensing, use, and mixing of flammable liquids apply. It’s important not to misapply this exception to general coating production work, as mixing processes often generate static electricity, vapor-air mixtures, and potential ignition sources. Bonding and grounding practices are critical, and Chapter 29 offers specific requirements to address those hazards.

In smaller operations where the total volume of flammable or combustible liquids remains under the maximum allowable quantities, organic coating manufacturing may be permitted by the local building official under a Group F-1 occupancy. However, when those quantities are exceeded—for instance, more than 120 gallons of flammable liquid or 240 gallons of combustible liquid—the facility likely qualifies as a Group H. H-2 applies to higher-hazard, flammable materials, while H-3 covers certain combustibles. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 16)**



These occupancy classes will determine the needed fire protection systems. Sprinkler requirements for Group H-2 and H-3 occupancies are found in Section 903.2.5.1 and any business without that level of protection would be in violation. Likewise, for fire alarm systems and occupant notification requirements see Section 907.2.5.

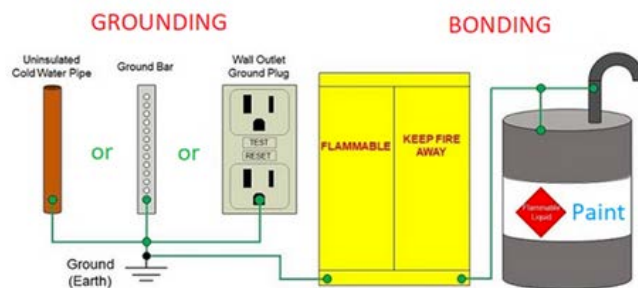
Other structural requirements for organic coatings are in the Oregon Structural Specialty Code, Section 418, and they include 2-hour separation for storage rooms, production tanks, or open kettles, which are vats used to heat the product to a high temperature during manufacturing.

While not all NFPA 35, the Standard for the Manufacture of Organic Coatings (2016) applies, it does have additional requirements related to deflagration hazards and the maintenance of some equipment like forklifts. The 2023 Oregon Electrical Specialty Code references this document and so electrical equipment, and wiring shall be maintained in hazardous (classified) locations in accordance with NFPA 35, Section 5.6.

We are all aware of the hazardous characteristics of typical flammable and combustible liquids, but you should also know that organic coating manufacturers normally also make fast-drying, high-gloss type coatings for woodwork, automotive, and industrial metal part finishing. The trade name for these products is “nitrocellulose” and their fire hazard characterizes can be explosive and deserve special attention. Chapter 29 has specific requirements for nitrocellulose, including where it can be located (sometimes in a detached building), limiting the amount available on hand, and other storage requisites.

While the recent fires in Ohio, Texas and Illinois occurred in large-scale manufacturing plants, it’s worth remembering that small shops pose significant risks as well. Any facility producing more than one gallon of organic coating per day falls within the scope of Chapter 29 and may require an operational permit under Section 105.5.37. That permit opens the door to fire department pre-planning and a better chance to enforce basic fire safety requirements—ventilation, bonding, containment, and suppression—before a small hazard turns into a major event.

Organic coatings manufacturing has always posed unique challenges. However, those challenges are manageable when fire inspectors understand how Chapter 29 fits into the broader regulatory framework. The Oregon Fire Code is an essential tool for mitigating these types of hazards in your community. Understanding the code is the first step.





REQUEST  
KITS TODAY!

# SMOKING FIRE PREVENTION



The Oregon State Fire Marshal, in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority's SmokeFree Oregon initiative, is launching the 2025 Smoking Fire Prevention Campaign—and kits are now available to order. Designed for use during the high-risk summer months (June–August), the campaign equips fire service and public health partners with materials to educate the public and reduce smoking-related fire incidents.

## WHY IT MATTERS:

From 2019 to 2023, Oregon saw 6,820 fires caused by smoking materials, nearly 4,000 happening during the summer months. Of those, 1,268 fires were in single- and multi-family dwellings, and more than 70% of summer smoking-related fires were classified as vegetation or outdoor fires. These fires led to \$7.5 million in estimated losses.

## WHAT'S IN THE KIT:

- Data summaries (2019–2023) on smoking fire incidents and fatalities.
- Prevention brochures for smoking and home oxygen use.
- Campaign posters and rack cards (with QR codes to safety surveys and quit resources).
- Coasters, stickers, and window clings to hand out.
- Social media kit.
- Suggested talking points.

## SUGGESTED USES:

- Distribute coasters and posters to local restaurants.
- Share educational materials at public events.
- Collaborate with local tobacco prevention coordinators.
- Promote quit resources and community risk reduction.



*Smoking Safety Survey*



*Campaign Materials  
Order Form*



## FROM THE **INTERNET**

In July, Ashland firefighters took to the ropes for training. Ongoing training is critical to maintaining readiness across the wide range of emergencies they respond to. Structural firefighters regularly train on firefighting tactics, emergency medical services (EMS), forcible entry, ladder operations, search and rescue, ventilation, hazardous materials response, and more. Consistent hands-on practice ensures they're ready to respond when their community needs them the most. [\*\*See Ashland Fire's post here.\*\*](#)

## HYDRANT TRAINING

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In July, the Imbler Rural Fire Department conducted hydrant training to ensure firefighters can quickly and efficiently access water during emergencies.

This hands-on practice helps crews maintain vital skills like establishing water supply lines and improving response times. Regular hydrant training is critical for rural departments to stay prepared and protect their communities effectively.

[\*\*See more images here.\*\*](#)



# SYDNEY SMITH TO LEAD A&I UNIT



The Oregon State Fire Marshal announced Sydney Smith as the new analytics and Intelligence Unit manager, effective Aug. 1.

Smith has served as a data and operations analyst with the unit for the past year. Before joining the team, she was the senior manager of analytics and evaluation for a bay area food bank, where she oversaw data collection and analysis for programs serving nearly 500,000 people monthly. She also led efforts to enhance data governance and business intelligence systems.

Smith holds a Master of Public Health in epidemiology and biostatistics, along with bachelor's degrees in microbiology and nutritional science, all from the University of California, Berkeley.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal welcomes Sydney to her new role and looks forward to her continued contributions.

# CASEY KUMP SWORN IN AS NEW REGIONAL SUPERVISING DEPUTY

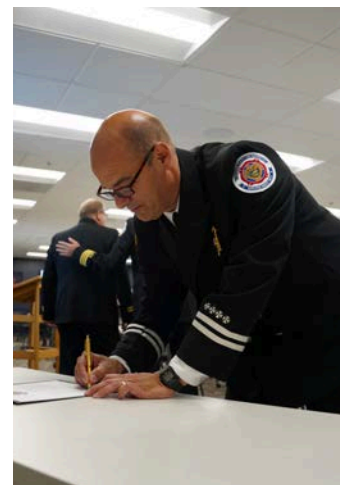
Casey Kump was officially sworn in as the Oregon State Fire Marshal's eastern region supervising deputy on July 30, following his promotion to the role earlier this summer.

Kump, who began his new position on June 1, has extensive fire service experience and deep understanding of Eastern Oregon operations, a steady leadership style, and strong reputation across the fire service community.

Kump joined the agency in 2016 as a deputy state fire marshal, having previously served as deputy chief, fire marshal, and battalion chief at Crook County Fire & Rescue. He began his firefighting career there in 2003 after working as a teacher in the Crook County School District.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Montana State University-Northern.

Congratulations to Casey on his new role!





# CONTACT US

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

Send it by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to:  
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