



OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THE GATED WYE

JULY 2025



LIVE BURN DEMONSTRATION

The Oregon State Fire Marshal partnered with the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety to show how simple, research-backed steps can help homes survive wildfire.

A live burn demonstration in Salem put defensible space and fire-resistant building materials to the test — with dramatic results.

READ MORE ON PAGE 2.

OSFM'S MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

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DEMONSTRATION: HOW HOMES CAN SURVIVE WILDFIRES

A home built to wildfire-resistant standards survived a live burn demonstration on June 25 in Salem, while a neighboring model home went up in flames in less than an hour.

The event, hosted by the Oregon State Fire Marshal and the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety, showed how defensible space and fire-resistant materials can significantly improve a home's chances of surviving a wildfire.

The timing of the demonstration is critical, as Oregon enters what is expected to be an above-average fire season. In 2023, wildfire burned a record 1.9 million acres in the state, part of a growing trend of larger and more frequent fires moving into historically less-affected communities.

"Wildfire is no longer a rural issue," Oregon State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple said. "It's a growing threat for all Oregonians. Today's demonstration shows how small, affordable changes can lead to real protection."

The destroyed home featured common elements like bark mulch within five feet of the structure and up against the foundation, plants against the siding, debris-filled gutters, and untreated cedar siding. These created easy ignition sources for embers.

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The surviving home, built to IBHS's Wildfire Prepared Home standard, included cement pavers near the foundation, ember-resistant vents, fire-resistant siding, and cleared gutters. These measures prevented flames from reaching the structure.

"Research should guide us in finding effective solutions," Roy Wright, CEO of IBHS said. "Maintaining a five-foot noncombustible zone around your home helps ensure embers fizzle out before they can ignite anything."

Oregon homeowners are now eligible to earn the Wildfire Prepared Home designation by meeting standards that include a Class A fire-rated roof, ember-resistant building features, and proper vegetation management.

According to Wright, many homes in Oregon already have Class A roofs, and additional upgrades can often be made affordably by homeowners themselves.

"These changes not only help homes survive, but they also make them more insurable," Wright said.

The Oregon Division of Financial Regulation has partnered with IBHS and the State Fire Marshal's office in recent years to study wildfire risk and its impact on insurance availability. Acting Insurance Commissioner TK Keen said applying wildfire science to mitigation and fire resistance is helping inform insurance rate-setting.

More information about defensible space assessments is available at oregondefensiblespace.org. Homeowners interested in the Wildfire Prepared Home designation can visit wildfireprepared.org.

GET COMFORTABLE WITH **DEFENSIBLE SPACE.**



FIVE SIMPLE 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.

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP FOR
A FREE DEFENSIBLE ASSESSMENT.](#)





WILDFIRE SEASON RUMBLES TO LIFE IN MID-JUNE

June brought an early and intense start to Oregon's wildfire season, prompting swift action from the Oregon State Fire Marshal, which responded to two conflagrations and a third fire under its Immediate Response authority.

The Rowena Fire in Wasco County began June 11 and quickly threatened homes west of The Dalles. Governor Tina Kotek invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act that afternoon, allowing the OSFM to mobilize six structural task forces and its Green Incident Management Team. Tragically, 56 homes were lost before resources arrived. After five days of firefighting, the threat to structures subsided and state fire marshal teams demobilized.

"This early season conflagration should come as a reminder to Oregonians to be ready for wildfire," State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple said. "The predictions for this summer are extremely concerning."

Less than a week later, the Alder Springs Fire broke out in Jefferson County, growing to more than 3,000 acres. Ruiz-Temple again mobilized resources—this time eight task forces and the Red Incident Management Team. Evacuations were issued in Jefferson and Deschutes counties. The Oregon State Fire Marshal demobilized resources on June 20.

On June 18, an Immediate Response was activated for the Upper Applegate Fire in Jackson County. Two task forces were sent to protect homes near Ruch from the 120-acre fire. With two conflagrations and multiple large fires already this June, officials urge Oregonians to prepare and avoid fire-starting activities.

"This is our third mobilization this month, a clear signal that wildfire season is here," Ruiz-Temple said. "Please help our firefighters by following local restrictions."



FIRELINE PHOTOS





DEFENSIBLE SPACE SAVES STATE PARK

When the Ferry Fire swept through Cottonwood Canyon State Park in June, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) officials feared the worst. But thanks to proactive defensible space work completed earlier this spring, all park buildings and infrastructure were spared.

According to park staff, the only damage sustained was the loss of a few old picnic tables and a shade structure. Officials credit the preservation of the park to fuels reduction efforts made in coordination with the Oregon State Fire Marshal.



The defensible space work was part of a broader Fire Adapted Oregon program led by the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Community Wildfire Risk Reduction and Defensible Space programs. Since November 2024, OSFM staff have trained nearly 100 state parks staff across Oregon on structure hardening and wildfire preparedness. In Cottonwood Canyon, park staff applied that knowledge by clearing vegetation and creating defensible space around key infrastructure.

Despite the park's shrubland and fast-burning fuels, the mitigation work made a clear difference. The successful outcome highlights the impact of interagency collaboration, involving state parks, the Oregon State Fire Marshal, the Bureau of Land Management, and other local fire partners.

ENGINE PROGRAM



The Oregon State Fire Marshal has made the final deliveries of new fire engines under its Engine Program, marking a major milestone in the agency's commitment to modernize equipment and enhancing wildfire response capabilities within the Oregon structural fire service.

The delivery of the last type 3 engines on Monday completes the agency's distribution of 76 new firefighting vehicles to local fire agencies. The program, part of Response Ready Oregon, was funded through Senate Bill 762, Oregon's wildfire omnibus bill signed into law in 2021.

"This is a landmark achievement for our agency, the Oregon fire service, and the communities we serve," State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple said. "Through this program, we're making a lasting investment in Oregon's firefighting capacity and preparedness at a time when the threat of wildfire continues to grow."

The OSFM Engine Program provided:

- 26 type 3 engines
- 20 type 6 engines
- 30 water tenders

The apparatus were awarded to 76 local structural fire agencies across Oregon following a thorough review process in partnership with fire service associations and an advisory committee. All units are fully equipped to meet the state's fire service mobilization standards and tailored for response in wildland-urban interface environments.

"From the first engine delivered to Central Cascades Fire & EMS to the final engines of Klamath County Fire District 1 and Keno Fire Department, each apparatus brings stronger protection for our communities," OSFM Chief Deputy Travis Medema said. "We are incredibly proud of the collaboration and commitment that made this program a success."

For a list of awarded agencies, photos of apparatus deliveries, and more information, visit the [OSFM Engine Program webpage](#).

FIRE DEFENSE BOARD DRILL HELD

On June 3, OSFM staff went through an exercise in the agency operations center with the Oregon fire service to be ready for when we mobilize resources.

When structural firefighters and our incident management teams are deployed, we activate this center. It is staffed 24 hours a day by our employees who track and provide resources to help communities who need help.

Our agency operations center is the backbone of the Oregon Fire Mutual Aid System, and we can't thank our staff for the valuable work they provide.



REDMOND CWPP TRAINING

The Oregon State Fire Marshal's Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Unit recently hosted a two-day training in Redmond focused on developing and updating Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). Led by experts from The Ember Alliance, a Colorado-based nonprofit specializing in wildfire adaptation, the course brought together planners, emergency managers, and wildfire practitioners from across Oregon.

Participants gained a comprehensive overview of CWPP fundamentals, from assessing wildfire risk to setting actionable priorities. Emphasis was placed on building strong community engagement strategies, identifying appropriate funding sources for defensible space projects, interagency partnership development, and building fire adapted communities.

The course combined practical tools with real-world examples to help attendees navigate the challenges and opportunities involved in CWPP development. By highlighting inclusive, place-based approaches, instructors reinforced the importance of tailoring each plan to reflect community values, local fire history, and the unique landscape context.

This training supports the department's mission to build local capacity and strengthen wildfire resilience at the community level. With renewed skills and connections, participants left better equipped to lead collaborative CWPP processes and advance wildfire risk reduction efforts statewide.





FIREWORK SAFETY IN FOCUS

With fireworks sales now underway across Oregon, the Oregon State Fire Marshal hosted a media event June 23 at its Salem headquarters to demonstrate the safe and legal use of fireworks ahead of the Fourth of July holiday. The annual fireworks sales season in Oregon runs from June 23 through July 6. This year, the agency is reminding Oregonians to celebrate responsibly with its message: "Keep it legal. Keep it safe."

The event included a live demonstration of how to properly ignite consumer-legal fireworks and how to safely dispose of them using a bucket of water. Fire officials emphasized fire prevention as wildfire risk increases across much of Oregon.

The agency also reminded residents that local governments may impose stricter rules or bans on fireworks, especially in wildfire-prone areas. Fireworks users are responsible for knowing and following those local laws.

Fireworks Safety Tips: The Four Bs

Fire officials urge Oregonians to follow these safety guidelines:

- Be prepared: Have water nearby, such as a bucket or hose.
- Be safe: Keep children and pets away from lit fireworks and avoid using fireworks near dry vegetation.
- Be responsible: Don't relight duds, and soak used fireworks before disposal.
- Be aware: Use only legal fireworks and only where permitted.

Know What's Legal

Only consumer-legal fireworks purchased from permitted retailers may be used in Oregon.

Fireworks that explode, fly into the air, or travel more than 12 feet horizontally are illegal without a state-issued permit. This includes bottle rockets, Roman candles, and firecrackers.

More information on fireworks laws, permits, and safety tips is available at the Oregon State Fire Marshal's fireworks webpage.

PHILLIP SHERBURN
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C. T. ARNOLD
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2025 FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL HELD AT DPSST



On June 17, Oregon paused to honor the fallen, as three people were added to the Fallen Firefighter Memorial Wall at DPSST in Salem.

The Oregon Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial stands as a solemn reminder of the nearly 200 brave individuals who have died in the line of duty since the 1880s, protecting our communities, our homes, and Oregon's natural resources.

At the ceremony, Oregon honored Division Chief Nicholas A. Berg of Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD, a dedicated volunteer firefighter for 47 years. Firefighter Benjamin Charles Sapper was in his first year of fighting fire with the U.S. Forest Service – Gold Beach Ranger District, and Captain Larry Damon Dean served with Salem Fire Department from 1987 to 2018.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal honors their dedication, courage, and sacrifice. Their names and stories are forever etched in Oregon's fire service history.

PEER SUPPORT SYMPOSIUM DRAWS FULL CROWD AT DPSST

More than 150 members of Oregon's first responder community gathered June 18 at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) in Salem for the inaugural Operational Peer Support Symposium.

The event brought together fire service, EMS, law enforcement, corrections, parole and probation, and 911 professionals from across the state to share best practices and receive advanced peer support training. The symposium, a joint effort by DPSST and the Oregon State Fire Marshal, is set to become an annual event held each June.

"This work builds trust, breaks stigma, and reminds our fire and public safety professionals that they are never alone," State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple said.

Attendees participated in sessions on topics ranging from stress injury and PTSD treatment to legal considerations around critical incident debriefings. A panel of peer team leaders and clinicians closed out the day, sharing strategies for sustaining peer support efforts in high-stress environments.

Organizers say the symposium aims to bridge the resource gap between agencies and strengthen the network of peer support across Oregon.



RISK REDUCTION KIT TRAINING BEGINS

On June 11, the Oregon State Fire Marshal's education team hosted their very first risk reduction kit training session, and it was a huge success! 19 Oregon fire agencies joined us to get hands-on with the new kit and are now ready to take these teaching tools into their communities.

The OSFM Risk Reduction Kits are a new tool that provides fire agencies with interactive materials to educate people of all ages on important fire safety topics like cooking, home heating, and electrical.

With props like mini pans, chimney sweep tools, extension cords, and more, the kit brings fire prevention lessons to life and helps make fire safety education more engaging and accessible.

If you are with the Oregon structural fire service and interested in learning more, check out our [webpage](#).



WELCOME TO THE TEAM

Blythe Janssen joins us as the special operations administrative specialist. With more than 20 years of experience in administrative operations and event coordination, Blythe is known for her attention to detail, collaborative spirit, and commitment to building strong team relationships.

Outside of work, she enjoys photography, playing soccer, and staying active in her community. We're happy to welcome Blythe to the OSFM team!

OREGON NERIS+ UPDATE



A great deal of foundational work continues to move NERIS+ forward. Recently, our team has been testing the new entity module in the State Repository and developing a draft version of the NERIS+ Core Incident run form. This behind-the-scenes progress is paving the way for a smoother onboarding experience for Oregon's fire service agencies.

We're also excited to share that the OSFM launched a dedicated [NERIS+ webpage](#)! This new hub includes the most current onboarding and implementation timeline, guidance for agency readiness, upcoming training opportunities, FAQs, and more. Over time, the page will house essential resources to support your transition to NERIS+.

Coming soon: In July, the OSFM will send instructions to fire chiefs and incident reporting coordinators on how to update agency information in the State Repository. This step is essential for onboarding into the new system, so please keep an eye on your inbox.

We'll continue to provide updates here in The Gated Wye, but as implementation nears, the NERIS+ webpage will become your go-to source for key information and tools.

Have suggestions or questions? Reach out anytime at OSFM.Data@osfm.oregon.gov.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM

Justine Schade brings a passion for education and community support to her new role. An educator, researcher, and applied linguist, Justine holds a bachelor's degree in Applied Linguistics and a master's degree in TESOL from Portland State University.

Her expertise includes digital literacy, language learning, and inclusive community solutions. A lifelong Oregonian, Justine loves karaoke (she's lost her voice four times!) and playing Dungeons and Dragons.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Oregon lawmakers approved a slate of new legislation during the 2025 session geared toward strengthening the state's wildfire prevention, emergency response, and community preparedness systems.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal secured funding to maintain its current service levels over the next two years, alongside targeted investments in wildfire mitigation, staffing, technology, and high-hazard rail safety.

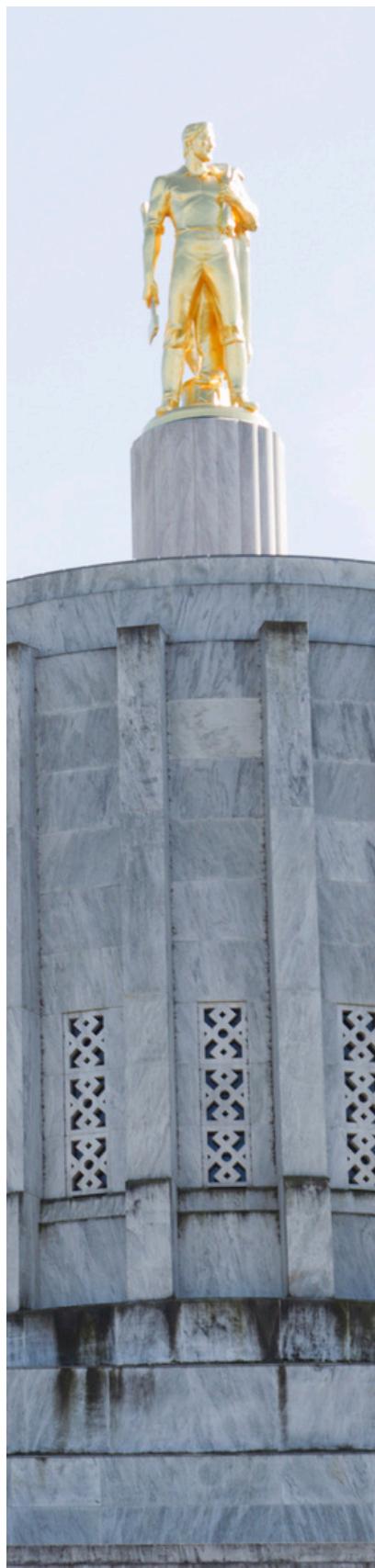
Among the important pieces of legislation were four agency requested bills: senate bills 860, 861, 862, and 863. These bills included cleanup language surrounding the State Fire Marshal Mobilization Fund, which covers costs from emergency mobilization and pre-positioning of firefighting resources. The law also mandates biennial reports on fund balances and expenditures to enhance transparency. Another will modernize agency operations and support local fire agencies. It codifies the Oregon Fire Code, allows fire districts to build evacuation routes, and updates reporting and identification requirements for districts. Another bill will clean up language related to cost collection from responsible parties who start fires.

The legislature also passed the agency's budget bill, allocating nearly \$40.8 million from the General Fund to the Oregon State Fire Marshal for the 2025–27 biennium. An additional \$54 million in spending authority was granted from fees and federal funds to support emergency response, public education, and agency operations.

Another major funding measure, House Bill 5006, appropriates \$13 million to the Community Risk Reduction Fund, further boosting the OSFM's efforts to support local fire prevention and education work.

House Bill 3940 reshapes Oregon's wildfire funding framework. It dedicates funding from a new tax on oral nicotine products to the state fire marshal's community risk reduction programs and to ODF's Landscape Resiliency Fund. The bill updates rural fire protection district (RFPD) taxing authority, allows for Oregon wildfire agencies to borrow from the Treasury for wildfire costs, and updates language impacting Department of Forestry and its landowner partners.

Other issues were also addressed. The cardlock program was updated. A high-hazard rail bill updates definitions and extends the life of Oregon's oil-by-rail safety fee program. And, finally, the OSFM will lead a review of RFPD budgetary options.



CODES CORNER

EMERGENCY RESPONDER RADIO COVERAGE

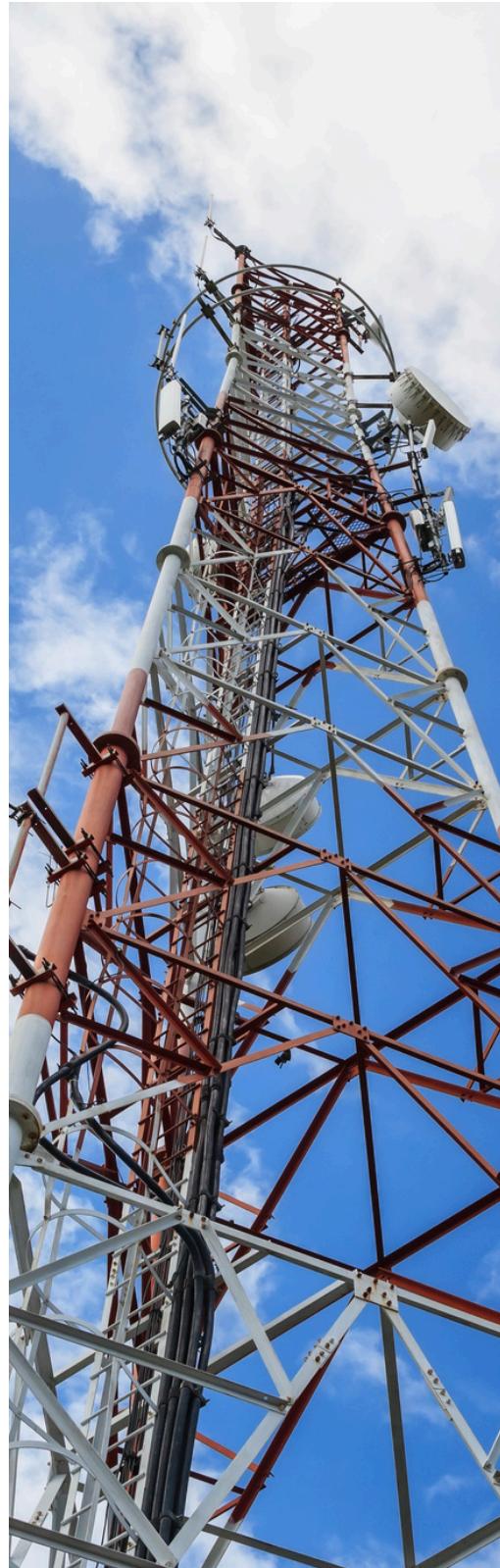
Communication is often cited in after-action reviews as a critical failure or hampering the safe and effective emergency operation. In rural areas, the communication failure is usually because of topography, but in urban areas, large buildings pose a challenge to responders. Emergency Responder Radio Coverage became a part of the Oregon Fire Code (OFC) in 2010 because of incidents in large buildings and a lack of adequate communications. In the 2022 OFC, the title was changed to Emergency Responder Communication Coverage for consistency with the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) and NFPA 1221, Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems. Of note is that NFPA 1221 has been consolidated along with NFPA 1061 into a new standard for 2022 that is NFPA 1225.

Emergency Responder Communication Coverage (ERCC) is located in both the OFC Section 510 and OSSC Section 918. The OSSC contains the requirements for construction and references OSSC Form 918. This form is located on the Oregon Building Codes Division website and is to be completed by the building owner and approved by the building official prior to construction. The requirements listed in the OFC are for maintenance and acceptance testing of the system.

Where can responders and inspectors expect to find an ERCC system? From both the OFC and OSSC:

- Any building with one or more basements or below grade building levels.
- Any underground building.
- Any building more than five stories in height.
- Any building 50,000 square feet (4645 m²) in size or larger.

Of course, there are exceptions when an ERCC system may not be in place with some differences between the OFC and OSSC. The key additional exception in the OFC is that if the ERCC system negatively impacts the normal operations of the building an automatically activated emergency responder radio coverage system may be approved.



CODES CORNER



As with any building system, long-term maintenance can be an issue and should be verified during routine fire inspections. An installed ERCC system must be tied into the fire alarm system for monitoring the following key status indicators:

- Loss of normal AC power supply.
- System battery charger(s) failure.
- Malfunction of the donor antenna(s).
- Failure of active RF-emitting device(s).
- Low-battery capacity at 70 percent reduction of operating capacity.
- Failure of critical system components.
- The communications link between the fire alarm system and the in-building, two-way emergency responder communication coverage system.
- Oscillation of active RF-emitting device(s).

With the limitations and costs associated with permanently installed ERCC systems, some Oregon fire departments have created alternative methods and means process for mobile ERCC systems. This allows the building owner to pay a fee into a fund for the long-term maintenance and operation of the mobile system. Some considerations with the mobile systems are maintenance, adequate number of mobile units, limitations of coverage, and personnel trained in their deployment. Advantages to the mobile systems is that they can be used at buildings constructed prior to 2010 and at buildings with a compromised ERCC system due to fire progression.

Communication at emergency scenes continues to be a challenge, but the fire and building codes have created provisions to assist responders in large buildings. Coordination with building officials for acceptance testing prior to final certificate of occupancy is critical. The testing should be completed close to the end of construction to ensure that the coverage is adequate in the completed building.

WORKFORCE WEBINAR

The Oregon State Fire Marshal recently launched its workforce webinar series with a session focused on recruitment and retention in the fire service. This first webinar explored the non-legislative solutions outlined in the [2024 Convening of the Fire Service report](#).

Panelists discussed the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association's diversity, equity, and inclusion toolkit and resource guide, [located here](#). They also shared best practices and lessons learned to help strengthen and sustain the fire service workforce.

Speakers included Troy Davis, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager at the Oregon State Fire Marshal; Chief Trish Connolly of Bend Fire & Rescue; Chief Amy Hanifan of McMinnville Fire Department; and Chief Rich Cowger of the Western Fire Chiefs Association.

The webinar included lots of great questions from attendees and offers practical ideas to support recruitment and retention efforts. Watch the recording [here](#).

OVFA ANNUAL BANQUET

The 2025 Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association Annual Banquet was held Saturday, June 21, at the Brooks Training Center.

Board members for the upcoming year were elected during the event, sworn in by Chief Ruiz-Temple. All positions serve one-year terms and director roles serve two-year terms. Those sworn in were:

- Frank Day - President
- Nick Funke - 1st Vice President
- Mark Barker - 2nd Vice President
- Jason Servatius - Secretary/Treasurer
- James Sievers - Director



The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Mike Greisen and Izaiah Adams was presented the Firefighter of the Year Award. For both awards, departments nominated candidates, and the board selected the recipients.

Chaplain Joel Peterson led "The Empty Table" memorial to honor fallen firefighters. A bell service was performed by the chaplain and the first vice president for those lost since the last conference.

The banquet concluded with a live auction to benefit the Legacy Oregon Burn Center, the event raises between \$4,000-9,000 each year.

REQUEST
KITS TODAY!

SMOKING FIRE PREVENTION



**PUT IT OUT.
ALL THE WAY.
EVERY TIME.**

- ✓ If you smoke, choose to **smoke outside**. Many items inside the home can catch fire if they touch something hot like a cigarette or ashes.
- ✓ Wherever you smoke, **use deep, sturdy ashtrays**, and place them away from anything that can burn.
- ✓ **Keep cigarettes out of all vegetation** including potted plants and landscaping - they can easily catch fire.
- ✓ **Make sure that the butts and ashes are extinguished** by using water before disposing in the trash.



SCAN



Smoking Safety Survey

SCAN



*Campaign Materials
Order Form*

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 links 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.

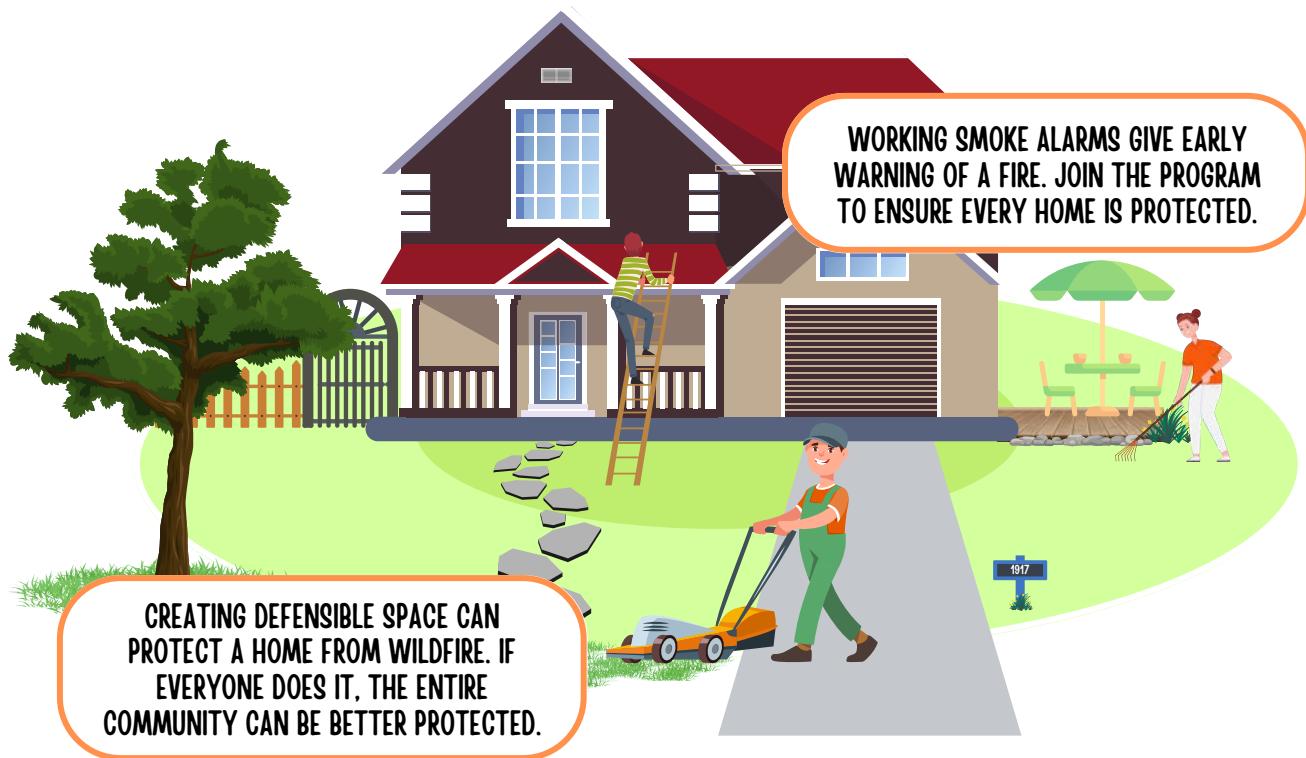
PROTECT HOMES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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!



FROM THE INTERNET

Eugene Springfield Fire hosted 16 amazing young women through this year's fire camp! Some of the things they have learned about include hose management, vehicle extrication, and ladders! The agency says are excited to be mentoring these young women and see what else they will accomplish. [Check out their post here.](#)

EXTRACATION TRAINING



Bend Fire responds to about one car accident each day, making it very important for our crews to know how to quickly and safely respond in all types of accident scenarios.

In mid-June responders practiced different extrication techniques to free entrapped victims from car crashes.

Training included how to stabilize a vehicle, gain access to a patient with glass, door and roof removal, and safely extricate the patient. [See more images here.](#)



CONTACT US

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

Send it by the 20th of the month to:
osfm.thegatedwye@osfm.oregon.gov

Kassie Keller, public affairs director
Kassie.Keller@osfm.oregon.gov

John Hendricks, public affairs specialist
Johnathan.Hendricks@osfm.oregon.gov

Nicholas Tenorio, public affairs specialist
Nicholas.Tenorio@osfm.oregon.gov

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