



OREGON

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon State Police
Office of State Fire Marshal
3565 Trelstad Ave. SE
Salem, OR 97317-9614
503-373-1540
Fax 503-373-1825
E-mail: Oregon.sfm@state.or.us
www.oregon.gov/osp/programs/sfm

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For Immediate Release

Sheridan/SW Polk/West Valley Fire Districts:
Contact Deputy Chief Damon Schulze, 503-876-2004

Office of State Fire Marshal:
Contact Rudy Owens, 503-934-8217, office or 971-332-0052, cell

Fire Investigation Concludes Multiple Fires Caused by Engine Exhaust

At approximately 3:30 p.m. on July 31, at the request of the local Polk County Fire Defense Board Chief, the Office of State Fire Marshal responded to multiple fires on Highway 18, west of Spirit Mountain Casino, near Ford Road. All fires were on the north side of Highway 18. Sheridan/SW Polk/West Valley Fire Districts served as the primary responding fire agency.

An OSFM Deputy State Fire Marshal served as the lead fire investigator in these fires, and worked with the Yamhill County Fire Investigation Team, the Polk County Sheriff's Office, the Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department, and the Oregon State Police on its investigation.

The investigation determined the fires were human caused and accidental, from vehicle exhaust debris from a passing vehicle.

The investigation was completed at 9 p.m.

The multiple fires serve as a reminder that vehicles with aging catalytic converters and vehicles that aren't properly maintained can pose fire risks.

Fire service agencies encourage anyone driving in Oregon, on and off-road, to have their vehicles, motorcycles, and ATVs serviced regularly before any travel begins.

Cars and trucks, motorcycles, and ATVs can easily throw sparks or overheat. Fires can also be sparked when vegetation comes in contact with hot engines.

Anyone driving should ensure all parts of their vehicles, from mufflers to chains, are secure and not dragging.

Drivers should also consider checking their tire pressure, wheel bearing lubrication, and if they may have old and worn-out brakes.

Smoking materials should never be improperly discarded by throwing them out windows of vehicles; dispose of smoking materials in deep, sturdy ashtrays. Improperly discarded smoking materials are frequent sources of human-caused fires.

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