



## OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

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# TIP OF THE WEEK

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### FIRE SAFETY

Fire season is in full swing and has reminded us to stay vigilant and cautious. Fire season is the time of year where wildfires are more likely to occur. There are precautions we can all take to reduce the risk of becoming the victim of a fire.

Many resources and status updates can be found at **Wildfire.Oregon.gov** or **KeepOregonGreen.org**. This week we want to share the following tips that can help keep you and your family safe.

### Preventing Fires and Fire Damage

#### **Protect your home**

Embers are the leading cause of home loss during a wildfire. They can travel up to three miles ahead of the main flame front. Creating a 30-foot defensible space around your home can increase its chance of surviving a wildfire. To start:

- Remove combustible materials like dried pine needles and leaves from gutters, eaves, and around your chimney.
- Limb trees several feet off the ground to help prevent fire from reaching the tree crowns.
- Keep patios clear of dry, combustible materials.
- Remove flammable items like outdoor furniture cushions.
- Get a free defensible space assessment and learn more from your local fire agency or by visiting <https://oregondefensiblespace.org/>.

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## **Campfires**

First, call or check with your local forestry office or fire district to learn if there are any current campfire restrictions. Only light campfires when it's safe and permitted.

When safely having a campfire:

- Select a flat, open location away from flammable materials such as logs, brush or decaying leaves and needles.
- Scrape away grass, leaves and needles down to the mineral soil.
- Cut wood in short lengths, pile it within the cleared area and then light the fire.
- Stay with your fire.
- Extinguish it completely before leaving.

## **When using equipment**

Before you start:

- Check with your local fire agency for equipment use restrictions.
- Make sure gas-powered equipment has spark arrestors.

Always:

- Use gas-powered equipment early in the day when the fire risk is lower.
- Avoid starting equipment near dry grass and plants.
- Avoid rocks and other solid objects that could cause a spark if a metal blade strikes them.
- Keep a fire extinguisher or hose nearby in case of a fire.
- Wear eye/ear protection and gloves.
- Use caution when welding or grinding metal, be aware of your surroundings.

## **When traveling**

While you are packing and preparing to explore Oregon, it's important to stay up to date on road closures with [Tripcheck.com](https://www.tripcheck.com) and have emergency supplies in case you get stranded.

- Check out the resources at [Car Safety | Ready.gov/Car](https://www.ready.gov/car)
- Extinguish all smoking materials completely and never in dry grass. Don't toss it out your window.
- Carry a shovel, bucket and a fire extinguisher in your vehicle to put out fires.
- Avoid parking or driving on dry grass; your vehicle can start a wildfire. Park on gravel surfaces or developed roadside pull-outs to avoid a vehicle's hot exhaust system touching dry grass.
- Ensure all parts of your vehicle, from mufflers to chains, are secure and not dragging.
- Check tire pressure, wheel bearing lubrication, and the possible metal-on-metal contact of worn-out brakes.
- Maintain and clean exhaust systems and spark arrestors.
- ATVs are required to be inspected when in use on public lands. Operate ATVs only on established roads and trails on public lands.

## **If There is a Fire or Threat of Fire**

### **Power Outages**

In certain cases, utilities may implement public safety power shutoffs (PSPS). A PSPS is a safety measure designed to help protect people and communities in high fire-risk areas by proactively shutting off electricity during extreme and dangerous weather conditions that might result in wildfires. Utilities may also need to deenergize lines to protect equipment from nearby fires, or to protect personnel fighting fires. What you can do:

- Contact your electricity provider or log in to your account and make sure all contact information is current so you receive alerts and messages.
- For individuals with a medical condition that requires power, contact your electricity service provider in advance of an outage to register a [Medical Certificate](#). This certification provides added benefits and helps the utility ensure they meet your needs in the event of an outage.

### **Natural gas tips**

- If required to evacuate, no need to shut off natural gas.
- If natural gas appliances do not operate properly once electricity is restored, call your natural gas service provider.
- If natural gas service is shut off, do not turn on yourself. Call your natural gas service provider to restore service.
- If you smell natural gas, evacuate immediately and call 911.

### **In case of evacuation**

Make, practice, and review your housefire and wildfire evacuation plans with your household. Help children learn the fire exits in each room of the house, where to go, and how to get help if you are not home. Remember to include pets and livestock. Know the evacuation levels and what to do.

#### **Level 1 (Green) – Be Ready for potential evacuation.**

Residents should be aware of the danger that exists in their area, monitor your devices and telephones, local media sources, and Sheriff's Office website to receive updated information. This is the time for preparation and precautionary movement of persons with special needs, mobile property, pets, and livestock. If conditions worsen, public safety will issue an upgrade to a level 2 or 3 for this area.

#### **Level 2 (Yellow) – Be Set to evacuate.**

You must prepare to leave at a moment's notice. This level indicates there is significant danger in your area, and residents should either voluntarily evacuate now to a shelter or to a family/friend's home outside of the affected area. If choosing to

remain, residents need to be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice. Residents MAY have time to gather necessary items but doing so is at their own risk.  
*This may be the only notice you receive.*

**Level 3 (Red) – GO NOW! Evacuate now.**

Leave immediately! Danger in your area is current or imminent, and you should evacuate immediately. If you choose to ignore this notice, you must understand that Public Safety Officials may not be available to assist you further. DO NOT delay leaving to gather any belongings or make efforts to protect your home.

This may be the last notice you receive until the notice is cancelled or downgraded.

Visit <https://www.co.lincoln.or.us/708/Emergency-Management> to sign up for or update your existing Lincoln Alerts profile, find active wildfires, or see recent emergency alerts.

For more information and tips visit our website at [www.lincolncountysheriff.net](http://www.lincolncountysheriff.net) and like us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office – Oregon.

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