



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

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TIP OF THE WEEK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISCARDING CIGARETTES FROM A VEHICLE

Large wildland fires are a part of living in the Pacific Northwest during the summer months. Wildland fires are dangerous, costly, and have a severe impact on air quality. Our partner agencies in the fire service do a great job of providing public information about burning and outdoor recreation restrictions to keep us all educated and safe. Despite their best prevention efforts, firefighters are still called upon to extinguish human-caused wildland fires all over the state.

Discarded cigarettes are a frequent cause of wildland fires along roadways. Even if the discarded cigarette does not start a fire, throwing them out of the car is still a crime under the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS). Here is a selection of applicable laws pertaining to discarding cigarettes from a vehicle:

- Throwing away of lighted matches, cigarettes, and other materials is prohibited
ORS 476.715: "No one shall, at any time, throw away any lighted tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, matches or other lighted material, on any forestland, private road, public highway or railroad right of way within this state." This crime is a Class B misdemeanor and applies year-round.
- Offensive Littering
ORS 164.805 § (a, c): "Discarding or depositing any rubbish, trash, garbage, debris or other refuse upon the land of another without permission of the owner, or upon any public way or in or upon any public transportation facility" or "Permitting any rubbish, trash, garbage, debris or other refuse to be thrown from a vehicle that the person is operating." This crime is a Class C misdemeanor and can apply to the person who threw out the cigarette and to the person operating the vehicle.
- Reckless Burning
ORS 164.335: "A person commits the crime of reckless burning if the person recklessly damages property of another by fire or explosion." This crime is a Class A misdemeanor.

Despite being a criminal act, discarded cigarette butts detract from the natural beauty of our area. Discarded cigarettes can contain chemicals and carcinogens that are harmful to animals and the environment. By properly extinguishing and disposing of cigarette butts, you are doing yourself, the community, and the environment a favor!

For more tips and information, please visit our website at www.lincolncountysheriff.net and like us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office – Oregon.