

Outdoor Fire Safety

Every year many Oregonians are unnecessarily hurt or injured while enjoying the outdoors because they fail to follow some basic fire and life safety rules. Common sense and taking a few simple precautions can keep a fun experience from turning into a tragedy. The Office of State Fire Marshal recommends following these outdoor fire safety rules.

- When tent camping always avoid open flame of any kind in or near the tent or canopy and never cook inside a tent.
- Only build campfires in a fire-pit or fire-ring, downwind of your tent, and make sure your fuel supply (wood/charcoal) is stored well away from the fire.
- Keep fire-extinguishing materials like water or dirt nearby.
- Clear a 10-foot fire spot of any flammable debris including dry logs, branches, bushes, needles, or leaves. Make sure there are no low overhanging tree branches above the fire spot.
- Be sure to completely extinguish your campfire before retiring for the night or when leaving the campsite.

When using fueled camping equipment, the State Fire Marshal recommends that equipment, like heaters, lamps and stoves are refilled outdoors, well away from any open flames.

- Extinguish or turn off all equipment before retiring for the night.
- Store all fuel containers well away from the tent and open flames.
- Never smoke while handling flammable liquids.
- Supervise children at all times when fires are burning or open grills are in use.

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Recreational Vehicle Fires Can Be Dangerous And Costly

State Fire Marshal Nancy Orr urges Oregonians to protect themselves from fire when using their recreational vehicles this summer. To reduce the chance of fire, Orr has the following safety tips for travel trailer and motor home owners:

Before leaving home:

- Make sure the vehicle has working smoke alarms. Test them before you leave and at least once a week during your trip.
- Plan and practice an escape route. Make sure exits are not blocked.
- Install an ABC rated fire extinguisher near each exit, and know how to use it.

Before operating the vehicle's stove or oven –

- Cooking appliances need fresh air flow for safe operation. Open overhead vents, windows or turn on exhaust fans to reduce the danger of asphyxiation.
- Keep combustible items like curtains or paper products well away from the stove.
- Cooking appliances should never be used for comfort heating.

If you smell gas –

- Extinguish all open flames including pilot lights.
- Do not operate electrical switches. Turning a switch on or off may cause an explosion.
- Shut off gas supply.
- Open doors, windows and vents and leave the vehicle.
- Have the gas system checked and repaired before using again.

"With common sense and proper precautions, recreational vehicle fires can be prevented," said Orr.

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Fire Marshal Urges Safe Traveling

State Fire Marshal Nancy Orr urges summer travelers to ask hotels and motels about their fire protection features before booking reservations and to select those properties with both smoke alarms and automatic fire sprinkler protection.

More than half of all hotels and motels in the nation have fire sprinkler systems. A combination of smoke alarms and fire sprinklers increases your chances of surviving a fire by more than 90 percent.

Orr also suggests these basic tips for safe vacationing:

- Be sure that your room has a working smoke alarm. In Oregon, travelers who are hearing impaired may request a smoke alarm with a strobe light to alert them to a fire in their room.
- Immediately locate the two exits nearest your room and count the number of doors between your room and the exits. This will help you find the exit under smoky or dark conditions.
- If you must evacuate a building, escape by stairways, not the elevators. If you must escape through smoke, crawl low under the smoke.