

VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

RV Fire Safety: Preventing Recreational Vehicle Fires

By: Robert Schattschneider

With the beginning of summer finally here, many of you are packing up your campers and RVs for some relaxation, fresh air and sunshine in one of our State Parks or private campgrounds.

Now I know that all of you are doing a great job of planning for all of the essential items that you will need on your camping trip, but are you ready for all of the things that can go wrong?

With some help from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, I've put together some safety tips and advice to help ensure that your camping vacation will turn out just as fun and problem free as you anticipated.

Let's take a look at your cooking appliances and cover some safety tips. First of all, make sure that you have proper ventilation before using that gas stove or oven, by opening an overhead vent and turning on any existing exhaust fans.

One of the leading causes of kitchen fires, in your home or RV, is leaving things unattended. Stay in the kitchen area and keep an eye on the stove top or electric skillet. Just as you would at home, make sure that combustibles are well away from burners and skillets. Never use cooking appliances for heating your camper.

Before and after using your gas appliances, check to make sure the noobs are in the off position. Accidentally leav-

ing the noobs in the on position can cause a buildup of gas which can be dangerous in more than one way.

After use, make sure the noobs are again in the off position. Extinguish all open flames, pilot lights, and shut off the gas supply. In the event that you smell gas, do not operate any electrical switches or any other device that can produce a spark or open flame.

If you smell gas or even think that there might be a gas leak, open the windows, ceiling vents and doors to ventilate the camper or RV, then get everyone outside while the camper ventilates itself. Again, shut off the main gas supply. Do not open the gas supply again until you have found and corrected the source of the gas leak.

Electrical heaters can be just as dangerous in your camper as they are at home. All heaters need plenty of space away from anything that can burn. Keep all paper, furniture, bedding and curtains at least three feet from your heating equipment.

When it comes to general electrical safety, make sure that your power cord connecting the RV to the campground electricity supply is in good condition. Inspect it for cracks or any kind of damage, including broken plugs or missing grounding blades. Check all electrical appliances for loose connections or controls that seem to be loose or missing. Avoid electrical overload by limiting the number of appliances oper-

ating at one time.

If you have your camper plugged into a power source at a campground, you should disconnect the power cord before using any generators to supply power to your camper. Supplying your camper or RV with both power sources at the same time, can cause your electrical circuitry to malfunction, causing an electrical fire.

Let's take a look at generator safety. Make sure that you check your generator's exhaust system. Check all of the connections regularly for leaks and tighten as necessary. Also check to make sure that generator's tailpipe extends past the edge of the RV. Whether your generator is built in or an external generator, make sure that you always operate the generator in an area where the wind will carry the exhaust fumes away from the RV. Always allow the generator to cool down properly before refueling.

Make sure that your camper or RV has a smoke detector *and* a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm. Make sure that you check the batteries prior to each trip to make sure your alarms are working properly. If either type of alarm makes a chirping sound, replace the batteries right away. Check the age of your alarms and replace them if they are 10 years old or older, or if the age of the alarm cannot be determined.

You are going to want to make sure that your camper is equipped with the correct type of fire extinguisher.



Make sure that it is the proper size and securely mounted in a convenient location. You will want to make sure that everyone knows where the fire extinguisher is located and how to properly use it in the event of a fire.

After you finish setting up your campsite, go over your escape plan with everyone, including where to meet in the event of an emergency. Once everyone has been accounted for, make sure you alert anyone else in the immediate area that might be affected.

Lastly, let's talk about campfire safety. Select a spot that is away from grasses and shrubs, overhanging branches, and stacked firewood. Scrape away leaves and litter to bare soil, at least 10 feet on all sides, and circle it with rocks. Keep your fire pit small and easy to manage.

Before you light any campfires, make sure that campfires are allowed in your campground. Always have a shovel and a bucket of water readily available. When you turn in for the night, or before leaving your campsite, make sure your campfire is completely extinguished.

I hope that the tips contained in this article will help you to plan a safe and fun vacation for you and your family. Now get out there and have some fun!

Please Slow Down

By Robert Schattschneider

On July 13, 2016 the VRFPD responded to a two vehicle accident at the 69-mile marker on Nehalem Highway South.

I witnessed several drivers approaching the scene at high rates of speed, oblivious to the accident just ahead, in spite of emergency vehicles with flashing red and white lights, burning flares on the side of the road, and a flagger with a red and white stop sign.

Although traffic was stopped in both directions at this particular accident, eliminating the threat of passing vehicles, we still needed to be aware of approaching vehicles that failed to slow down in a reasonable manner.

Please slow down to a maximum speed of 5 mph when passing emergency vehicles, flaggers, and first responders. 15 to 20 mph might seem awfully slow to you, but when we are standing on the pavement, 15 to 20 mph is extremely fast from our point of view.

Please pay closer attention to your driving habits when approaching and passing accident scenes. We want to go home at the end of the day! Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Burn Legally • Burn Responsibly
Burn Permits,
Rules & Regulations
Vernonia RFPD 555 E. Bridge St.
Mon-Thurs 9am-4pm or
by appointment 503-429-8252

Calls responded to June 1-30

Fire	3
Emergency Medical Service	35
Hazardous Condition	1
Service Call	10
Good Intent	3
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	0
Special Incident	0
No Emergency Found	0
False Alarm	2
Total	54

VOLUNTEERS WANTED



VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

VRFPD is currently accepting applications for Volunteer Fire Fighters.

- You must have a High School Diploma or G.E.D., a valid Oregon Driver's License, and be at least 18 years of age.
- Currently, you must be able to attend weekly training on Monday nights
- Willing to attend the Fire Academy
- Live or work (employer willing to let you respond to calls) within VRFPD's District
- Applications can be picked up at the Fire Station.



Here's What We Do!

VRFPD
555 E. Bridge St.
Vernonia, OR 97064
503-429-8252

VRFPD FIRE CHIEF
Earl Dean Smith
dc4502@yahoo.com
503-709-8821 (cell)
503-429-8252 (office)

VRFPD P.I.O.
Robert Schattschneider
pio.vrfpd@gmail.com
971-225-8332 (cell)
503-429-8252 (office)