

VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Time To Close The Door on Fast-Moving Home Fires

A simple behavior change could save lives

By Robert Schattschneider

As consumers we have come to demand speed. We order a book on Amazon and it's delivered to our front porch that afternoon. Order your dark roast on an app and it's waiting for you at the coffee shop. But speed is also killing people in their homes.

The pace in which a fire races through a home has increased at a deadly rate. Today, a person has about three minutes from the start of a fire to escape a house fire. That's a far cry from 40 years ago when you had about 17 minutes.

The materials used to build and furnish our homes have changed. Natural materials were used in the past, but now synthetics are more common and they burn faster. Add to that the open floor plans common in today's homes and it presents the perfect storm for a quick escalation of a fire. Research tells us that heat and speed of growth have both increased.

The results have been devastating.

The National Fire Protection Association estimates that fire departments across the U.S. respond to an average of 357,000 residential fires annually. That

has led to an average of 2,470 civilian deaths and 12,890 civilian injuries each year.

Lexi King survived a house fire, aided by a simple habit. Her family wasn't as lucky.

Lexi liked to sleep with her bedroom door closed. Her brother's door was always open. When an overnight fire destroyed their Texas house she was the only one to survive. Her brother and parents died in the fire.

"What I had was a closed door. I had oxygen. I had time to collect my thoughts. I had time to prepare myself," said King. "There literally is not a day that has gone by that I haven't thought of them and their beauty that they brought."

UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute (FSRI) found that rooms with closed doors during a fire had average temperatures of less than 100 degrees and 100 ppm of carbon monoxide, compared to 1,000+ degrees and over 10,000 ppm of carbon monoxide in the open-door rooms.

Each day fire departments across the nation respond to a variety of calls, some more easily controlled than others. Often, residents have escaped themselves prior to their arrival. Sometimes they haven't and residents are

trapped. That's why we are leading a campaign across the community to change a simple behavior. In partnership with UL FSRI we are promoting "Close Before You Doze" to encourage every family to make sure they close all of their doors – bedrooms, bathrooms, basement – at night to starve the fire of the oxygen it requires to grow and to give you more time to escape the fire.

There is a recipe to increase your chances of survival in a fast-moving house fire.

- Make sure your smoke and CO alarms are in working condition. Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. Smoke alarms should be interconnected. When one sounds, they all sound. Test them monthly.

- Close your doors at night.

- If a fire hits and you can get out of a burning structure, get out and close doors behind you as you exit. If you can't, put a closed door between you and the fire to buy yourself valuable time.



Don't ever go back inside a burning home.

- For parents worried about not hearing their children in the middle of the night with a door closed, simply place a baby monitor in your child's room. If you can't get to your children's room because you're cut off by smoke the closed door will provide a safety barrier and you know your children have longer to survive in that situation.

- Have an escape plan, identify multiple escape routes from every room and practice them as a family at various hours.

After a fire starts, there's little time to act. Take these fire safety and prevention steps today and you'll sleep easier at night.

Open Burning With Permit

Under Oregon law, ORS 478.960, citizens of Oregon can burn certain items if they have a valid permit issued by the Fire Chief in their area.

Each year everyone waits for the dry season to end so they can clean up all the yard and garden debris. But time and time again, those who do burn, forget about the rules.

Because of the Environmental Quality Commission, there are regulations concerning what can and cannot be burned.

VRFPD responds annually to numerous complaints concerning illegal burns, and most complaints are well founded.

VRFPD posts on Facebook and contributes information in the Voice newspaper, concerning what can and cannot be burned.

Autumn Is Back

By Robert Schattschneider

Autumn is upon us with all of the seasonal changes and activities that we all enjoy. Whether it's the changing of the leaves, fall festivities, or hunting season, autumn has just about something to offer everyone.

With Halloween just around the corner, let's remember our little ghosts and goblins, princes and princesses will be out trick or treating before you know it. Keep them in mind when the time comes so they can all have a safe and fun night out collecting candy and other goodies.

Autumn also means that our daily weather will start to be in the form of liquid precipitation. So I'd like to remind everyone that our roads out in this neck of the woods get pretty slippery when wet. Take the time to slow down a bit on your com-

mute into the valley. Leaving a few minutes early will make up for the time that you spend being careful.

Because illegal burning is becoming such a problem, VRFPD will begin issuing citations for illegal burning, and subjects can also be charged for the expenses incurred (Charges for Service).

When you purchase your burn permit, you are given the information needed to comply with the burn permit.

So once again, you can burn yard and garden debris, tree trimmings, and leaves.

You CANNOT burn, any form of lumber, household garbage, construction material, demolition debris, tires, petroleum products.

If you have any questions about open burning, please contact the fire station at (503) 429-8252, or email the Fire Chief at: firechief@Vernoniarfpd.us

Bow season is over, but rifle season for deer has just begun. I think we all know someone who goes deer and elk hunting. With that being said, keep an eye out for our four legged friends. They will be active from the pressure put on them by the hunters, and Mother Nature will also have those bucks and bulls working overtime chasing after their female counterparts. So while you are out and about, keep an extra eye out for them crossing the road.

And lastly, it will not be long before we have some overnight freezing temperatures. Whether it's in the form of ice, snow, or heavy frost, it will add some time to your commute. Keep the temperature in mind when you are out traveling our highways and forest roads.

Calls responded to September 1-30

Fire	1
Emergency Medical Service	44
Hazardous Condition	1
Service Call	7
Good Intent	8
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	0
Special Incident	0
No Emergency Found	0
False Alarm	3
Total	64

VOLUNTEERS WANTED



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)

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.

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