

VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Death and Taxes

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Two things are certain in life, taxes and death.

We spend our money and valuable time each spring preparing our taxes to see how much we will get back or how much we might have to pay to Uncle Sam. I tend to wait until the last minute and am always a procrastinator bragging, "I do my best work at the last minute." Taxes, OK fine. But if you wait until the last minute, OF YOUR LAST MINUTE, you may be putting your friends and family in a predicament that no one wants to be in.

Death is a subject no one wants to discuss, however, it is important to those of us left behind who have to make important decisions. It's time.

We have all heard about living wills, trusts, and end of life plans, but

there may be something else you haven't heard of: the POLST Registry.

POLST stands for Physicians Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment and creates specific medical orders to be honored by health care workers during a medical crisis. Registry means it is an official list available to those in home health, emergency, or other health care services. Unlike your Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) form, EMS personnel are able to call a number to see if a name is registered in case your DNR form is locked away in a safe with your other important paperwork. Similar to a DNR, POLST is mainly designed for folks who have certain religious beliefs, are sick, elderly, or are expected to pass in the next year or so. The legal work has been done. The only cost to you is a trip to your primary care physician, (PCP). If it is your elderly parent that comes to mind, go with them to their PCP and ask. It will release the burden

from them as well as you.

When you have an emergency and call 911, your local first responders will come and ask many questions: allergies, medications, past medical history, etc. We also will be looking for a BRIGHT PINK form from the fine folks at the POLST Registry. It should be kept on the refrigerator or somewhere you can get to it quickly. Don't let the doc hand you the form and send you out the door. Go over it thoroughly with your PCP, making certain you understand what boxes to check and that it's signed. It's of little use to us if they don't sign it.

In addition to your BRIGHT PINK form, the VRFPD offers a BRIGHT YELLOW medical info form. The yellow card has a place for your name, past medical history, list of meds and allergies. It is handy for your EMS team, especially if you are unable to speak when they get there. If you don't want to display all your private info on the fridge,



put it in a drawer you can easily reach or with your box of meds. Yellow VRFPD info forms are available at the station or call and ask.

One of my favorite things about Vernonia is the many kind people who genuinely care about each other and take special care of our local senior citizens.

Don't be deadly wrong, or gravely mistaken! For more information visit polst.org or call 1-888-4-POLSTS (1-888-476-5787).

Fire Wise Safety Tips: Be Prepared for Fire Season

We would like to remind the residents of our district to get their property ready for this year's fire season.

There are several steps that you can take to prepare your property and protect your home from wild fires.

Action steps for around your home:

- CLEAR leaves and other vegetative debris from roofs, gutters, porches, and decks. This helps prevent embers from igniting your home.
- REMOVE dead vegetation and other items from under your deck or porch, and within 10 feet of the house.
- SCREEN in areas below patios and

- decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- REMOVE flammable materials (wood piles, propane tanks) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck, or porch.
- Wildfire can spread to tree tops. PRUNE trees so the lowest branches are six to 10 feet from the ground.
- KEEP your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs

are fuel for wildfire.

- Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. DISPOSE of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- INSPECT shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair the shingles that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
- COVER exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- ENCLOSE eaves and screen soffit vents using 1/8 inch metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

When it comes to grilling:

Here are some safety tips for outdoor grilling that will help protect you and your home.

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

CHARCOAL GRILLS:

- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

To view these tips and many more, go to <http://firewise.org/> and search their website for hundreds of safety tips that cover numerous topics.

Please take the fire season seriously and follow all of the safety tips to help protect you, your family, and your property. Follow VRFPD on Facebook for notices, burn conditions, and closures, and updates concerning what's going on in the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District.

Feel free to call Chief Smith for questions or concerns at (503) 429-8252.

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

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

VRFPD FIRE CHIEF
Earl Dean Smith
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503-709-8821 (cell)
503-429-8252 (office)

Calls responded to April 1-30

Fire	1
Emergency Medical Service	27
Hazardous Condition	1
Service Call	11
Good Intent	3
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	0
Special Incident	0
No Emergency Found	0
False Alarm	1
Total	44