

# VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

## Taxes and Death

By Trish Smith  
EMT Basic Vernonia Volunteer

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](http://polst.org) or call 1-888-4-POLSTS (1-888-476-5787).

## Property Cleanup

While you are out enjoying this wet, early summer weather, and preparing your property for fire season, please don't forget your driveway. A topic of discussion is how driveway clearance and occupancy changes over the years. When not properly accessible, the worst happens. Responders can't make it to help or they do costly damage to public vehicles trying to gain access.

Driveways are to be 12 feet wide, with an all-weather road surface that can withstand 70,000 pounds. Plus, four feet clearance on each side with a height of 13 feet. Trees and brush should not be leaning into the roadway from the sides. This ensures that we can access your home quickly and safely. It also keeps our ladder racks and light bars

from being damaged or ripped off by swatting and snagging branches.

If your driveway is longer than 150 feet, then it needs to have a turn around. The turnaround needs to have the correct turning radius and length, not only for a small ambulance, but for our largest fire apparatus as well. This takes more than most realize and usually gets forgotten, leading to long

term parking, lack of upkeep and miscellaneous storage. This turnaround's vacancy is critically important so that responding vehicles have easy in and

out access in time of an emergency.

If you have any questions, please reach out to us for copies of all the rules and regulations. We would be happy to come out and take a look at your driveway/turnaround as well, so if the unfortunate need arises, the crews can gain access to provide you the best service.

## Rescue Group

Over the last year Vernonia Fire has been going through an adventure with Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD. We have called this adventure our Rescue Group. This group will function as an all-around technical rescue team in the future. But because of our certification levels and our recruits experience we have to start small.

We have been focusing a lot on Rope Rescue training. This involves low angle and high angle rescue. Every third Wednesday of the month we meet with our partners from Mist to go over ropes and

knots, mechanical advantage systems, raising and lowering systems, and so much more.

We are excited to be getting this group together and hopefully one day we may have enough interest from the community and team members that we can form our own rope rescue team, swift water rescue team, and other technical rescue teams. For now we'll continue to improve the services we bring to the community. If you're interested in seeing what you can do for your community come down to the Fire Department and grab an application.

## FOR SALE

1. 1984 Western States 2000 gallon Pumper Tender. Detroit powered Allison transmission with 1250GPM pump. Comes with some large diameter hose and 1.5" pre-connect attack lines.
2. 1 pallet of miscellaneous fire hose, non-certifiable.
3. 1 pallet of miscellaneous fire hose that passed 2018 testing, but is no longer used by the dept.
4. 1 pallet of 5" large diameter hose.
5. 1 set of 4 tires, 17s, less than 100 miles on them.
6. 1 set of 3 tires, 50% or so tread left. All terrain.
7. 1 set of 6 wheels, steel, fits 99 f550.

If interested, contact the department during business hours: Monday-Thursday 9am-4pm at (503) 429-8252.

## Calls responded to June 1-30

Fire	2
Emergency Medical Service	38
Hazardous Condition	1
Service Call	11
Good Intent	3
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	0
Special Incident	0
No Emergency Found	0
False Alarm	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>

VERNONIA  
RURAL  
FIRE DIST.



**CAN YOU FILL  
THESE BOOTS?**

**VOLUNTEERS  
WANTED**

**Call Dean Smith  
for more information  
on free training  
(503)429-8252**