



COWLITZ COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #5

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We Are You

We can't do this job alone



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September 2015



COWLITZ COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #5

Newsletter

From the Chief

It is not a rarity to receive phone calls asking if it is ok to burn. This year the answer was no earlier than usual. Even with cloud cover and a spritz of moisture once in a while, conditions this year are far more extreme than in previous years here on the West side of the state.

Most folks look at the grass and see that it is brown. What they don't see are the fuel moisture levels in the 1, 10, 100 and 1,000 hour fuels.

- ◇ 1 hour fuels comprised of plants or wood less than 0.25 in diameter and the surface layer of ground litter.
- ◇ 10 hour fuels comprised of wood from 0.25 to 1 inch in diameter and ground litter from the surface to around 0.75 below ground.
- ◇ 100 hour fuels comprised of wood from 1 to 3 inches in diameter and ground litter from around 0.75 to 4 inches below ground.
- ◇ 1,000 hour fuels comprised of wood from 3 to 8 inches in diameter and the forest floor layer 4 inches and more below ground.

So what do the hour classifications mean? It is the time base needed for fuel moisture to come into equilibrium with the environment. This year with the continued warm temperatures, continuous winds and little moisture, be it humidity, morning dew or rain, fuel moisture levels are critically low. The 1 hour fuels (think of as paper) are always susceptible to ignition. Yet this year, the 10 hour fuels (think of as kindling) and 100 hour fuels (think of as the log) are highly susceptible to ignition due to no or very low moisture levels. All these factors contribute to a high fire hazard, easy fuel ignition, rapid fire growth and hotter fires.

Help us with good defensible space around your structures, clear driveway access for our apparatus, clear address signs for your residence and no burning of any material(s) during the identified burn bans.



Regular Board Meetings are held on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month at 9:00 a.m.



Calendar of Events

- **October** - Fire Prevention Month. This year's theme - "Hear the Beep Where you Sleep!" Have working smoke detectors inside each bedroom.
- **November 1st** - Daylight savings ends. Set your clocks back 1hr and change your smoke detector batteries!
- **December 24th** - Santa Cruise. See Santa and his Fire-fighter friends as he visits families on a Fire Engine!

Happy Fall

Make this Fall a happy and safe time. Take these steps to get your home and family prepared for the possibility of cold and wet days ahead.

- Have your chimney cleaned and inspected
- Clean your homes gutters and downspouts to avoid costly water damage to your roof and siding
- Service your furnace and have the filters cleaned or replaced
- Ensure any space heaters you need to use are UL listed and the cords are free of defects
- Keep space heaters at least **3 feet** away from walls, furniture and materials
- Use caution on ladders when doing outside maintenance or hanging decorations

- Remember to **Change Your Clock, Change Your Batteries** on November 1st. Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors need batteries to work properly. If your detectors use regular 9-volt batteries they need to be changed every 6 months to keep the devices working smoothly
- Vacuum your clothes dryer vent and be sure to clean the filter after each load
- Place non-skid tape on outdoor stairs to avoid falls in wet conditions
- Create a Defensible Space around your home by clearing away bushes, tree limbs and combustible materials within 30 feet of the house. Maintaining a defensible space around your home helps prevent the spread of wildfire to your home year around
- Never use cook stoves or ovens to heat your home
- Make a Home Fire Escape Plan and practice it with the whole family. Make sure everyone knows where the safe meeting place is

Community Support Utility Rig



Cowlitz County Fire District #5 brought on a new utility duty rig in August replacing an 11 year old unit.

Breaking from tradition, it is not the traditional fire red, or the white historically used as a utility color, it is black and orange. As our Volunteer members and Career staff live and work in the community, we felt it appropriate to have a vehicle in our fleet that showed our community pride and support. With that, we decided on the Kalama Chinook colors for the vehicles theme.

We are excited and proud of the end product and hope you will be as well.

Burn Ban in Effect

Through midnight September 30th

Marijuana Edible Dangers

Marijuana edibles are becoming an increasing concern for emergency personnel and hospital staff.

The following facts are available online at www.wapc.org

The effects from marijuana edibles can take from 30 minutes to 2 hours to take effect.

The amount of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) - the main psychoactive ingredient in marijuana - can vary in marijuana edible products. This makes it harder to control how much THC is consumed. The amount of THC in homemade marijuana edibles can vary even more. Many users can be caught off-guard by the stronger potency and long-lasting effects of edibles.

Some edibles have more than one dose of THC in them and may come with directions to only consume half of a product.

These marijuana edibles come in different forms including drinks, popcorn, candies (various gummi shapes, suckers and chocolates), cookies and of course, brownies.

As always, ensure marijuana edibles other drugs and all medications are kept out of the reach of children.

If you have ingested marijuana edibles and call 911 because you aren't feeling well, it is extremely important to tell the emergency personnel what you took and how much.

If you suspect a child has ingested marijuana or other drugs, call 911 immediately. Tell emergency personnel exactly what the child took. Too often, parent's or caregivers don't tell the emergency personnel what the child ingested out of fear of getting in trouble. The importance of immediately knowing what the child ingested far outweighs any repercussions of wrong doing.

Hosting Resources

For the fourth year, Cowlitz County Fire District #5 has been cooperatively working with the Department of Natural Resources. One of the programs from that relationship is hosting resources. For the second fire season in a row, our Station #52 on Todd Road has been converted and utilized as a mini fire base camp. This year we have hosted:

- 1 – 20 person Type II Initial Attack hand crew from New Mexico
- 1 – 20 person USFS Type II Initial Attack hand crew from Southern Oregon
- 1 – 20 person Hot Shot crew (Ahtanum Shots) from Yakima, WA.
- 1 – 5 engine, 17 person Strike Team from South Utah
- 1 – 5 engine, 17 person Strike Team from North Utah
- 1 – 5 engine, 15 person Strike Team from Twisp, WA.
- 1 – 5 engine, 16 person Strike Team from San Juan County, WA.
- 1 – 5 engine, 17 person Strike Team from Cowlitz/Wahkiakum County, WA.

Though it is a lot of work and time to host these resources, the benefits to the community and region are immense. From the meals at local restaurants, supplies from local businesses, fuel from local stations and the other miscellaneous purchases, the economic impact is significant. As well, with additional resources on hand, quick mitigation of Wildland incidents locally and regionally reduces the economic loss to private property, natural resources and infrastructure.

We are honored to have the opportunity to host these resources and have them available to our District and Region.



What if Volunteer Firefighters Didn't Volunteer?

We Can't Do This Job Alone.

Call us to learn about becoming a volunteer 673-2222.

Must be 18 or older (or enrolled in Fire Science) and live within the District #5 response area.