



COWLITZ COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #5

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We Are You

We can't do this job alone



Find us on Facebook



www.sparky.org

You Are What You Think

"Autumn shows us how beautiful it is to let things go" - Author unknown.

As we prepare for seasons to change, take a moment to appreciate the present. Often times we get so wrapped up in taking care of the house, family and work that sometimes people can neglect to care for themselves.

Spring and Summer are usually thought of as the time to "get healthy" and exercise more, but our minds require healthy habits and daily exercise too.

Mental health is an integral part of our overall health. Feelings of self-doubt, anxiety, guilt or helplessness are nothing to be ashamed of but they are not something you have to struggle with.

There is help and those feelings are something that you can let go.

Finding the right coping mechanisms along with good healthcare are key. Talk to your doctor about your symptoms to see what they suggest.

Common self help techniques are exercise, meditation and being more present.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness <https://www.nami.org/> has resources and information that can help you with deal with mental health issues for yourself or someone you care about.

Don't give up! If you are not comfortable with your doctor, ask for someone else.

Keep trying, you are worth the effort!

Kalama Postal Patron

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October, 2019



COWLITZ COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #5

Burn Barrels are Illegal.

They were banned in Washington State in 2000.



NEWSLETTER

Alternatives to Burning Yard Debris

Chipping, shredding and composting are healthy alternatives to outdoor burning.

Renting or purchasing a chipper or shredder can create mulch which is helpful to your yard!

Burning yard debris causes smoke which carries particulates and can cause breathing problems for those with diminished lung capacity or other health problems. If you are going to burn yard debris (NOT GARBAGE) please, be mindful of your smoke and the nuisance it can be to your neighbors.

Smoke and odor complaints can be filed online with Southwest WA Clean Air Agency at <http://www.swcleanair.org/> or call 360-574-3058

Fire Safety Reminders

- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside sleeping areas.
- Smoke detectors DO EXPIRE. If your smoke detectors are 10 years old or older, it's time to replace them. Even if they are hardwired.
- Test your smoke detectors ONCE A MONTH.
- Remember to change the 9v batteries in your smoke detectors every 6 months or as required by the manufacturer. (Some models require no batteries changes but must be replaced entirely at the end of it's life)
- Have a fire escape plan for your home. Plan 2 ways out of every room, 1 Safe Meeting Place and PRACTICE your plan with your family.
- Do not store firewood against your home. Doing so creates a fire danger and invites creepy crawlies!
- Clean and inspect chimneys and woodstove pipes each year.
- Portable heaters MUST be at least 3 feet away from any combustible items. Curtains, furniture, toys and other items can easily ignite if placed too close to a space heater.
- Unplug unused appliances. Coffee pots, toasters, electric skillets and other appliances have been know to short and cause fires.
- Candles should never be left burning unattended.
- Sleep with bedroom doors closed.

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



Calendar of Events

- October 31st- All City Halloween 3-6 p.m.
- November 3rd - Daylight Savings time ends (Set your clocks BACK one hour)

Improved Fire Protection Rating

Cowlitz County Fire District 5 is pleased to announce that the fire protection rating for our Fire District has improved which could mean lower premiums for your fire insurance. Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau (WSRB) evaluates all Washington communities for their fire protection/suppression capability. WSRB uses a rating schedule that is approved by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner and it includes four major areas for consideration. The areas that are considered are fire department, water supply, fire safety control, and emergency communications.

WSRB evaluates the fire department (Cowlitz County Fire District 5) by reviewing such items as apparatus, equipment carried on apparatus, apparatus maintenance, pumping capacity, reserve apparatus, distribution of fire stations, automatic aid agreements, response to alarms, department personnel levels, and training. This is 40% of the evaluation.

They also evaluate the water supply by determining the adequacy for fire-suppression purposes. WSRB considers capacity, distribution and maintenance of our communities water systems, as well as fire hydrants. With the fire hydrants they consider the hydrant size, type, locations, and condition. The water supply is 35% of the evaluation.

For the fire safety control portion, which is 16% of the evaluation, fire prevention activities are considered. These activities include, fire code enforcement, public education, and building code enforcement.

Finally the emergency communications, worth 9% of the evaluation, are reviewed. This is an evaluation of the 911 system used to dispatch the fire department. Facilities and the handling and dispatching of fire alarms are reviewed.

After WSRB completes the evaluation, they assign each community with a Protection Class of 1 through 10, in which 1 indicates exemplary fire protection capabilities, and 10 indicates the capabilities, if any, are insufficient for insurance credit. The last time the WSRB completed an evaluation in 2015, Cowlitz County Fire District 5 received a rating of 6. The District worked on improving areas that could impact future ratings. After this last evaluation from WSRB, the unincorporated areas of Cowlitz County Fire District 5 improved from Protection Class 6 to Protection class 4, effective January 1, 2020. The area within the City of Kalama improved from Protection Class 6 to Protection Class 5, also effective January 1, 2020. Cowlitz County Fire District 5 also maintained the Tender Credit for the unincorporated areas after the new evaluation.

“These Protection Class ratings will apply to dwelling and commercial properties located within five road miles of a responding fire station and having standard fire hydrant distribution and water supply. Properties in the District not meeting these requirements will receive a different rating. Protection Class ratings for individual dwelling and commercial properties are available free of charge by calling WSRB customer service at (206) 217-0101 or emailing customerservice@wsrb.com. WSRB recommends that you contact your insurance agent to determine the relative effect this new protection classification will have on your insurance premium.” (Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau, n.d.)

Looking forward, the District will continue to enhance our fire suppression and prevention capabilities in order to maintain and attempt to surpass our new and much improved Protection Class ratings. The Protection Class rating improvement from a class 6 to a class 5 in the area within the City limits is not as remarkable as the advancement to the unincorporated area. However, there are opportunities to make further upgrades. New equipment such as a ladder truck and additional full time Firefighters would serve to improve these ratings. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints we can not make those changes at this time. However, we will work within our budget to effect improvements. We will evaluate our current practices, develop new innovative approaches, and continue to endeavor to deliver the best level of service for our District.

Make your home Defensible

The lush, thriving foliage that surrounds the Pacific Northwest makes for a beautiful landscape. Unfortunately, as we have seen it can also provide fuel for fires during dry, hot, and windy conditions. Many homes in our community are surrounded by these great wooded areas and this creates the potential for wildland urban interface (WUI) fires. However, there are ways you can protect your home and family from WUI fires.



If you reduce the flammability of materials on and near your home, you can protect yourself from these fires. By reducing combustible vegetation from around your property, you decrease the possibility of fire spreading to your home. To prevent flames from reaching your house, create a 30-foot safety zone around your entire house. Some ways to achieve this 30-foot safety zone are:

- Use fire resistant mulches like lava rock or pebbles
- Mow grass on a regular basis
- Rake leaves and remove all dead vegetation from this zone
- Cut back tree branches that hang over the house
- Trim back tree branches from the bottom of large trees, keeping them six feet from the ground
- Firewood, debris piles, and out-buildings should be outside the zone
- Clean roof, eaves, and gutters of twigs, leaves, and other combustible debris
- Install spark arresters in chimneys
- Keep a garden hose readily available that is long enough to reach any area within the zone

As far as building materials for your home, when you consider re-roofing remember that composition roof shingles resist burning far more than wood shingles. Embers from wildland fires can ignite twigs, leaves, and debris on your roof. However, composition roof shingles will resist burning under these conditions. Siding is also a concern. Fiber cement siding is much more fire resistive than other types of siding. By using fire resistive building materials such as composition shingles and fiber cement siding and keeping a defensible space around your home, you can protect your home against wildland fires.

During a very large WUI fire in 1961, in Bel Air, California, 95% of all homes with non-flammable roofs and a 30 to 50-foot safety zone survived the fire. In 1990, during another large WUI fire in Santa Barbara, California, 86% of the homes with non-flammable roofs and a 30-foot safety zone survived while other homes were burned.

Fire resistive building materials and a 30-foot safety zone create your defensible space, making your house far less vulnerable to fire spread. Data collected over the last 50 years illustrate how effectively defensible space protects your home from the devastating effects of fire. The lush landscape of the Pacific Northwest makes for an ideal setting for your home. Defensible space can help ensure your home will remain in this ideal setting for many years to come.

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.