



Rogue Valley Fire Chiefs Association Monthly Meeting Minutes

Location: Fire District #3 Date: January 20, 2026

**Rogue Valley Fire Chiefs Association
Meeting Minutes
Call to Order: 9:00 a.m.**

1. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve: Chief Rasor
- Second: Chief Thompson
- Vote: All in favor

2. Financial Report

- Balance: **\$4,953.61**
- Motion to approve: Chief Rasor
- Second: Chief Thompson
- Vote: All in favor

3. New Members / Special Guests / Presentations

- **New Member: Chief Girard from the Rogue Valley Airport**
- **Ken Kehmna** – Western Fire Chiefs Association – Presentation on wireless communication tower opportunities
- **Jim Court** – Red Cross presentation
- **Paula Shelly** – OSFM Firesafe Cannula Valve / Smoking Fire Fatalities and Incidents

4. Old Business

- **RV TAC 3 Discussion** – Chief Clelland provided update.
- **Strategic Plan** – Chief Crume had this item tabled, as the document is currently being worked on for submission.

5. New Business

- Mutual Aid Agreement – Prince
- Letter of Support for WFCFA – ASH01 Tower Replacement
 - Motion to approve: Chief Crume
 - Second: Chief Thompson
 - Vote: All in favor
- Home Oxygen Program – Chief Thompson and OSFM Teresa Vonn

6. Section Reports

- **Operations (McBride):**
 - The radio discussion is being worked on and will be brought back to the RVFCA for final approval at a later date.
- **Rogue Interagency Training Association (RITA):**
 - Heather Mook has resigned with RITA, and they will be working on a replacement. Thank you for your time with the association.
 - 2026 Fire Academy running well with the recruits and cadre.
 - Fire Officer II: April 13–17 at Grants Pass Fire.
 - Driver/Operator: December, date TBD.
 - RITA President is Division Chief Gavlik from IVF
- **Fire Defense Board:**
 - (Hussey) Mob Plan Committee is being worked on with 2026 revisions to certifications and social media items.
- **Technology Group (Shay):**
 - Continuing RV-TAC 3 channel discussions. Final draft to be completed March 17th and Go Live by May 2026.
- **RV Prevention Co-Op (Kassab)**
 - Teresa Vonn is the new President, and Ian will continue to assist until April or longer is needed.
 - Budget \$10,600.00
 - Home Oxygen program discussed
 - Smokey Bear Presentation: Email will be coming out in regard to the presentation slides for team teaching.

7. Advisory Reports

- **911 Centers – Josephine County/Jackson County:**
 - Both Agencies - Absent
- **Ambulance Service Areas (Clough / Rasor / Hammond / Mathews):**
 - **Mercy Flights (Clough):**
 - **Tablet Command and Flight Vector (our CAD) interface project** is in the building phase between the two technology vendors. They are building the data feeds that will connect these two systems and allow our units' status information to populate into the Tablet Command system, providing visibility of the Mercy Flights units to the fire agencies using Tablet Command. We anticipate the building phase will be complete by end of year or early January; barring any roadblocks that arise in the builds. Once the feeds are built, we will move into the testing phase to validate these feeds function properly which will require engagement with fire agency

partners. As the testing phase shows success, we will launch training and set a go-live date.

- **In-Home Emergency Care pilot project** for Mercy Flights received a huge boost forward with a grant from the Ashland Community Health Foundation to cover services for seniors and veterans once the new model is deployed in early 2026. We continue to engage in contract negotiations with Medicaid and Commercial health plan partners in preparation for the pilot launch. Mercy Flights is developing an education & communication campaign regarding the pilot project and will include presentations to the first responder and healthcare communities to build awareness of program objectives and processes.
- **HELICOPTER RELOCATION:** Placing a helicopter at the Ashland Airport for better flight following and response capabilities in weather incidents.
- **Fire District #1 (Hammond):** Absent
- **Ashland Fire (Razor):**
 - Finished the year with a 6% increase in call volume.
 - They are at full strength at this time.
 - They were able to sell the van ambulance that they had for sale
 - Five ambulances are running at this time
- **HazMat Team 08 (Howard):**
 - Minimal Responses last month
 - EV fires discussion and training to be determined
 - There will be a Spring Exercise in Klamath.
- **Oregon State Fire Marshal (Stacy/Vonn and Cook):**
 - **(Stacy)**
 - Working on the Plan of Cooperation with all Fire Departments/Districts
 - **(Vonn)**
 - OSFM might hire 2 additional Risk Reduction Specialist
 - There are Fire Life Safety Educators moving forward with the interview process currently
 - Smoke Alarm training will be at the end of Jan
 - **(Cook)**
 - Reimbursement packets should have been completed and sent out at this point
 - Maintenance issues with the engine program that is being worked on.
 - Task Force Leader Symposium April 28-29 at Seven Feathers
- **SW Oregon Coordinating Group (Kurzyniec):**
 - Brushing season in the counties with CWGG implementation in Josephine County
 - National Wildfire Committee discussion
 - Hiring soon
 - Training season is coming up
 - SONCAL email will be coming out shortly (April 8-9)
 - **(Lee)** Seasonal recruitment openings soon
- **Emergency Management – Richmond / JOCO / Ott / Burns / Razor:**
 - (Richmond): Absent

- (Kelly): Absent
- (Ott): Absent
- Josephine County EM: Absent
- **Pacific Power (Lawless):**
 - Absent
- **Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (Hussey/Brown):**
 - Roundtables were attended well and great information brought to all that attended. Record breaking numbers and will have to relocate next years sessions.
 - OFCA Conference is the end week of May 2026, and look for more information to come.
 - Discussions for the current legislation is happening with OSFM and other committees. More information to come.
- **Public Information (Weber)**
 - Ahley Blakely from Mercy Flights will be taking the reins on this platform
 - **S-203** class coming soon; register through RCC or contact Natalie.
- **Weather:**
 - 24-hour weather number: **541-776-4332.**
- **Southern Oregon Public Safety Chaplains / SOCERT (Saada):**
 - The SOCERT has had 14 debriefs in 2025. And already starting 2026 with a few debriefs happening.
 - Health and Safety Roundtables coming up with Fred teaching.

8. Agency Brief-Outs

- **ODF:** (Kurzyniec) Looking at the dollar amount for burning and chipper programs. They are receiving a new Engine soon. (Lee) Thank you all to a good fire season. (Fumasi) There are current dispatcher changes.
- **Grants Pass 911:** Any issues with Pierce that other departments have had, please contact Chief Sanchez. Hiring 5 with a February start date. Starting a new Student Program. They are working with FD#4 with the swift water rescue and boat operations.
- **RITA** (Dickerson): OFCA Health and Safety Roundtables next week, subjects being instructed are Fred Saada, OSHA, Retiring mental health and psychiatric evaluation discussion.
- **Rural Metro:** New engine being built and in its final stage of production. They will have an 86 Ford Cab Over available for purchase.
- **Rogue Valley Airport (Girard):** New Fire Chief. A third AARF apparatus has been purchased, with an 18-month build.
- **FD#4:** Maritime awareness introduction being completed with the departments (Rogue River, Grants Pass, and FD#3). If you have pictures for the STRAT Plan, please send them to Chief Thompson. Discussion about DPSSST certification update process.
- **Medford:** 2025 ASA Renewal processes happening.
- **Mercy Flights:** Appreciation for the support with continued service for the last 5 years.
- **Ashland Fire:** February testing for 2-3 vacancies. Deputy Chief of Operations employment flyer out. Working on ESRI and Tablet Command and getting closer each day to be integrated with the fire agencies. And also working on LZ Mapping and training.

John Holmes

From: Ashley Blakely <AshleyB@mercyflights.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 11:48 AM
To: John Holmes; Chris Wolfard
Cc: Sheila Clough
Subject: Change in Local PIO Group

Good afternoon,

I wanted to share that I am one of the new leads for the local PIO group. I would love the opportunity to attend the RVFC meetings to provide updates and explain more about our new direction. Could I be added to the upcoming schedule?

I also wanted to clarify, that I'm part of this group, are there any PIO responsibilities that would be assumed for the RVFC Association? I know things have shifted over time, so I'm just trying to get a sense of what expectations or roles might be in place.

Thank you so much,

Ashley



Ashley Blakely
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[Join Mercy Flights Membership](#)



First Responder Direct Disaster Number

If you're a first responder requesting help from the American Red Cross for someone affected by a home fire or other disaster, call:

833-583-3111

This phone number is only for first responders and should not be shared with the public. Individuals seeking help can call 1-800-RED CROSS for customized support.



Jim Court

American Red Cross VOLUNTEER
DISASTER SERVICES

jim.court@redcross.org
jcourtfamily@charter.net



Cascades - SouthWest
Oregon Chapter
Mobile # 541-281-9903

Call 1-800-REDCROSS
for Disaster Assistance



ONE SMALL DEVICE WITH A BIG IMPACT.

Want your community to be safer by reducing the risk of life-threatening fires and injury for those using home oxygen therapy?

Join the OSFM's Thermal Fuse Installation Pilot!



THE DEVICE

Thermal fuses are small, bidirectional safety devices installed on home oxygen lines which stop the flow of oxygen in the event of a fire.

THE SCIENCE

Thermal fuses are inserted into home oxygen tubing and engage when heated, blocking the flow of oxygen in the delivery system.

THE BENEFIT

Stopping the flow of oxygen removes a key source of fire acceleration and potentially prevents ignition of the oxygen or nearby materials.



READY TO MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY SAFER?

SCAN THE QR CODE TO ACCESS OUR INTEREST FORM.



JOIN OUR PILOT!

Oregon fire agencies reported **57 smoking fire fatalities** between 2019-2023. Nearly 40% of those involved home oxygen administration.

We estimate that **over 200,000** Oregon adults have been diagnosed with a chronic condition that may lead to the use of home oxygen therapy (HOT). For those on HOT, fire risks can be compounded by factors including age, comorbidity, physical and cognitive disabilities, tobacco dependence, social economic limitations, and living in rural areas.

We need **your help** to make these Oregonians, and the communities they live in, safer.

REQUIREMENTS

01

Participate in a required training to learn how to install thermal fuse devices during home safety assessments in your community.

02

Commit to participating in the pilot for 12 months which includes device installation and education for your community.

03

Participate in monthly reporting to provide feedback on best practices, identifying gaps, and celebrating successes in your community.



971-707-3174



paula.shelly@osfm.oregon.gov



www.oregon.gov/osfm

County	2018-2021 Adults ever diagnosed w/COPD %	2018-2021 # Adults w/COPD impacted	2018-2021 % 55+ever diagnosed w/COPD	2018-2021 Adult Cigarette Smoking Population %	2018 - 2021 # of Adult Cigarette Smokers	2019-2023 Smoking Fire Fatality	2020-2024 NFIRS Data: Cause - Smoking	2020-2024 NFIRS # of Smoking Fires 1-2 & Multi-Family	Total Number of Fire Agencies
Coos	11.6	6,000	36.4	23.3	11,800	4	31	6	16
Tillamook	10.2	2,200	26.5	20.9	4,100	1	4	*	7
Union	9.8	2,000	28.8	15.3	3,000	1	13	6	9
Baker	9.2	1,300	22.1	22.4	2,800	0	4	1	11
Columbia	9	3,800	30.4	23.9	9,400	3	35	5	5
Grant	8.8	*	8.8	23.3	1,500	1	2	*	9
Douglas	8.5	7,800	24.1	20.4	17,700	2	54	6	27
Jackson	8.4	14,900	23.6	17.9	29,900	5	80	14	14
Josephine	8.3	5,900	27.6	21.4	14,600	0	61	6	6
Lincoln	8.0	3,300	26.9	19.8	7,600	2	180	6	8
Umatilla	8	4,900	34.5	16.6	10,100	3	38	10	10
Klamath	7.8	4,300	26.9	16.3	9,000	4	27	4	15
Yamhill	7.5	6,300	24.2	13.6	11,000	1	20	4	10
Lane	7.3	22,900	23.8	15	46,300	7	287	18	19
Curry	7.2	1,400	17.7	19.2	3,800	1	*	*	12
Linn	7.2	7,100	26.8	14.5	13,900	1	38	13	10
Deschutes	6.7	10,300	22.4	11.7	17,600	2	167	33	8
Wasco	6.6	1,400	19.3	16	3,400	1	15	7	8
Oregon	6.4	222,500		14.7	424,600	57	6,065	468	309



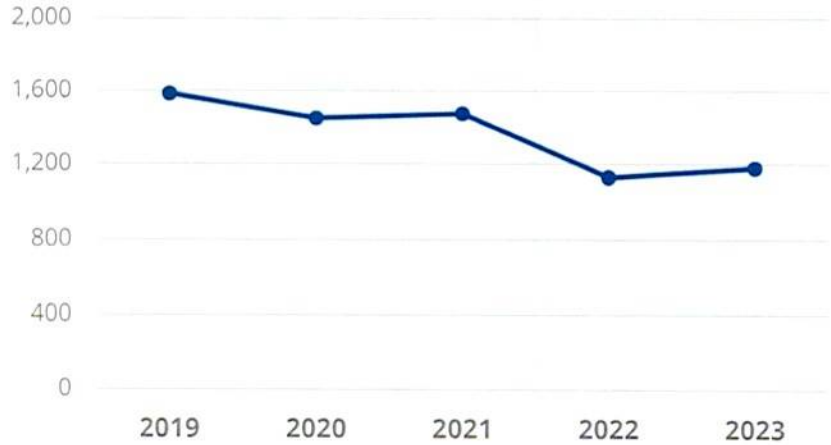
OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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Smoking Fire Incidents

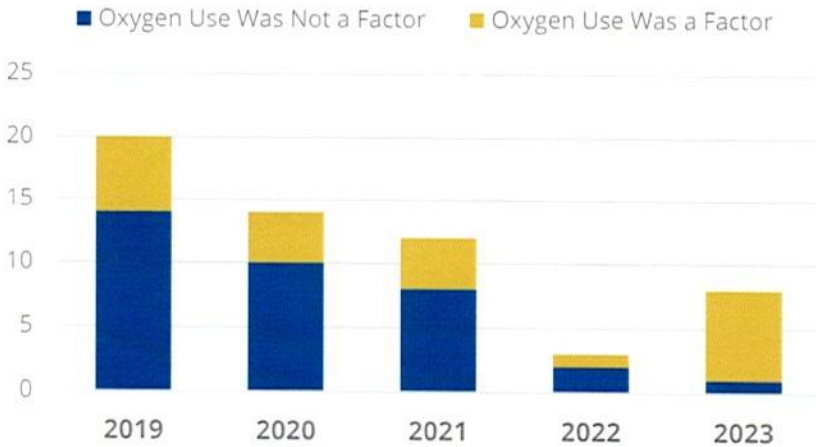
Between 2019 and 2023, the state experienced a reported 6,820 total fire incidents caused by smoking resulting in an estimated \$24.7M in losses. Although nearly 20% of these fires were located at single and multifamily dwellings (1,268), smoking fires at these property types accounted for almost 80% of the estimated losses associated with all smoking fires during this period (\$19.6M). Across 2019-2023, there was an average 6% year over year decrease in total smoking fires with the largest annual decrease occurring from 2021 to 2022 (nearly 350 fewer incidents).

Total Smoking Fires
Statewide



More than 90% of smoking fires during this period did not have equipment reported as involved in ignition. Of those that did, 4 included "oxygen administration equipment" listed as involved. The most commonly cited equipment involved in smoking fire ignition was cigarette/cigar lighters (225 total incidents from 2019-2023).

Smoking Fire Fatalities
Statewide



Smoking Fire Fatalities

Across 2019-2023, 57 fatalities occurred throughout the state due to smoking fires and smoking-related fire injuries for an average of 11 fatalities each year. For most of this period, deaths from these incidents trended downward with an average year over year decrease of 40% from 2019-2022 followed by an increase of 167% from 2022 to 2023. Notably, this increase was entirely due to fatalities from smoking fires and fire injuries in which oxygen use was a factor. Across this 5-year period,

smoking while on oxygen was a factor in nearly 40% of all smoking fire fatalities.

In these cases, cause of death was generally thermal and/or inhalation injuries from fires that ignited due to smoking. When oxygen use via mask or cannula was present, ignited oxygen was also cited in multiple cases as contributing to the fatality.

Compiled and created by:
Analytics & Intelligence Unit, OSFM
1/8/2025
S. Smith



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SMOKING FIRES & FATALITIES

STATEWIDE SUMMARY

2019 - 2023

Overview

This summary highlights data related to smoking fire incidents and fatalities that occurred within the state from 2019 to 2023. Fire incident data was provided to the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) by structural firefighting agencies and were identified as any National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) fire incident with a cause of smoking using the OSFM causal matrix, excluding cases in which mutual or automatic aid were given. Smoking fire fatalities were those either suspected or confirmed via reports from medical examiners, Deputy State Fire Marshal fire investigations, or Oregon Health Authority to be a fatality that occurred following a smoking fire or due to a smoking-related fire injury (e.g., fatal respiratory burns following inhalation of ignited oxygen due to smoking while on supplemental oxygen).



Help improve patient safety by reducing the impact of oxygen-aided fires with the **Firesafe** Cannula Valve

- Automatically stops the flow of oxygen in the event that the downstream oxygen tubing is ignited.
- Offers a cost-effective solution to lower the risk of serious patient injury in an oxygen fire.
- Can be installed in seconds and helps keep patients safe no matter what method of oxygen delivery they use.
- Now bidirectional, so it's even easier to install.
- 5 year intended life (or until it shuts off in the event of a fire), serving as a longer-lasting tubing connector.



RES010F-20
Firesafe Valve

Also available —
Firesafe Nozzle
RES010FND

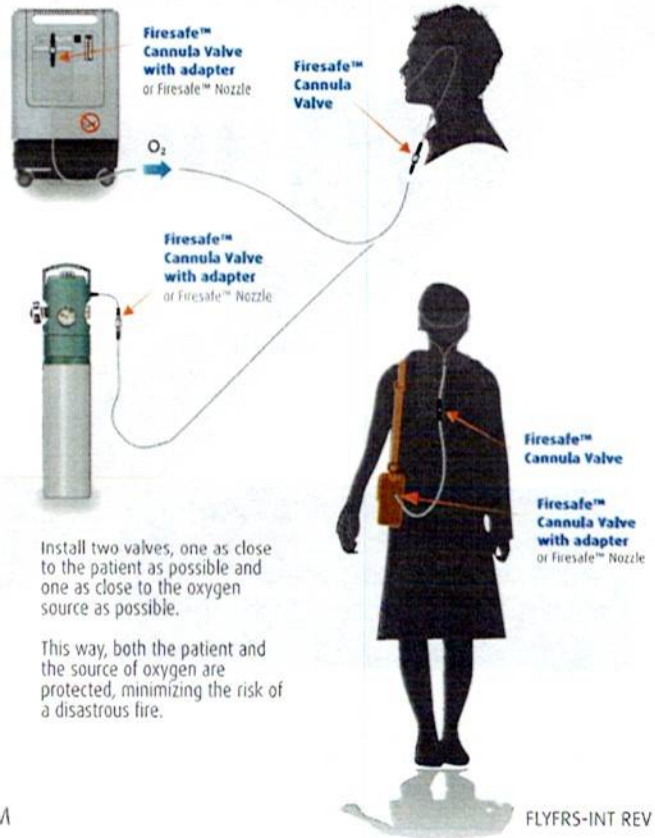


1 mm smaller in diameter
than previous device

65% lower resistance to flow

The potential for firebreaks to reduce the impact of accidents and save lives is clear.

After firebreaks became mandatory in England and Wales in 2006, the average number of deaths by fire was 0.36 per thousand patients per year. In the US, where firebreaks were not required, 0.62 patients per thousand died - almost twice as many.



Home oxygen fires in the United States

Research into the prevalence and impact of home oxygen fires in the U.S.: 2017-2019

BPR Medical examined media reports of home oxygen fires between December 2017 and August 2019 in the U.S. The report recorded a total of 311 incidents during this 20-month period and revealed that the actual home oxygen fire death toll is likely to be double compared with previous estimates by the National Fire Protection Association; between 100 and 150 deaths per year.

Death and injury toll

164 number of deaths recorded

1 death every 4 days

71 number of serious injuries

Risk to public health

1 in 3 incidents referenced an exploding cylinder

11 of the reported deaths were third parties, including family members or other residents

2018 The year a firefighter died when a propane tank exploded due to an oxygen fire

Property damage



\$15.3 million Estimated cost of property damage



Proportion of incidents in which a **whole dwelling was destroyed** or severely damaged



There were separate cases where **50, 60, 70, 100** and **110** people were forced to relocate as a result of an incident

Home oxygen fires represent a **much higher risk in the United States** than the United Kingdom, where stakeholders work together to reduce risk and where the fitting of oxygen firebreaks (also known as thermal fuses) is mandatory.

Fatalities per 100,000 patients



A U.S. home oxygen user is twice as likely to die in a home oxygen fire than in Japan, and almost 20 times more likely than in England

19x England **2x** Japan

This new data points towards a material public health problem in the U.S., highlighting the urgent need for better practice and regulation

For a copy of the report visit firebreaks.info/unitedstates

#needafirebreak

Where firebreaks were not universally mandatory (2018-17)

1 death was reported among 73 in the prison population (2018-17)

Source: National Fire Protection Association (U.S.); Japanese Medical Gas Association (Japan); BPR Medical (2019) The prevalence and impact of home oxygen fires in the U.S.