



Camas - Washougal Fire Department

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CWFD

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July 4th Report



This year's 4th of July celebration was accompanied by concern over the tremendously dry conditions we have been experiencing. There was extensive public debate about whether fireworks should be curtailed or banned outright. While many fires occurred throughout Clark County that were likely caused by fireworks, Camas and Washougal emerged relatively unscathed. After having been out on evening patrol both on July 3 and 4, it was my observation that fireworks discharge by our residents was far less than in past years. It would appear that many citizens heeded warnings that it was not a safe time to set off fireworks and decided to celebrate the holiday in other ways. Thank you for helping keep our communities safe! While out on patrol those nights, however, I noticed a significant safety concern that is worth mentioning. While driving through neighborhoods I saw, in several instances, citizens discharging fireworks that had been placed either on the center line of the road or directly in the lane of travel. On the surface this may seem to have been the safest thing to do in keeping fireworks away from homes. Unfortu-

nately this is a very unsafe practice and in two separate instances I almost hit a child and then an adult who were darting out in to the middle of darkened streets to light fireworks that had been placed there. The middle of public roadways is not a safe location to discharge fireworks.

Finally, we fielded many phone calls from residents over the holiday asking why we didn't ban fireworks due to the fire danger. As we advised all such callers, we have no legal ability to do so. State law does not allow a jurisdiction to implement a so-called "emergency" ban on fireworks. The only way this is allowable is if the jurisdiction in question has already passed a code or ordinance change allowing such discretion (and has allowed at least a year following such a change before enforcement). I anticipate many of our cities will be having discussions over fireworks rules over the coming months. Whether you're "for" or "against" fireworks, please watch for public meeting notices and take the opportunity to have your voice heard.



Nick Swinhart
Fire Chief



Promotion and New Hire: Longtime CWFD Captain Greg Payne (left) has been promoted to Administrative Battalion Chief. Greg has worked for the department for over 25 years and has most recently been heading up the training division. Congratulations to Chief Payne! Also in July, longtime CWFD volunteer firefighter Adam Strobeck (right) will start his career as a full time firefighter/paramedic with the department. Adam has most recently worked as a paramedic for AMR in Vancouver. Welcome, Adam!

Our Mission:

"To provide the highest quality service to our community through the protection and preservation of life and property"

Summer Grilling Safety Tips

CWFD knows that many of our citizens are taking advantage of the weather to enjoy time outdoors grilling their favorite food. Please keep in mind the following safety tips from the NFPA:

General grilling tips

- 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 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
- Check the major connection points between the gas (propane) tank hose and the regulator and cylinder, and where the hose connects to the burners. Tighten if loose.
- Check the gas (propane) tank hose for the potential (gas) leaks. To do that:
- Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose using a brush or spray bottle.
- Turn the propane tank on. If there is a gas leak, the propane will release bubbles around the hose (big enough to see).
- If there are no bubbles, your grill is safe to use.
- If there are bubbles, turn off the tank and check connections, then have your grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
- If the leak doesn't stop, call the fire department immediately.

When the grill is on:

- As you are cooking, if you smell gas, turn off the gas tank and burners.
- If the leak stops immediately, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
- If the smell continues, move away from the grill and call the fire department immediately. Do not move the grill.

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.