



OREGON

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Office of State Fire Marshal records increase in civilian fire fatalities for 2007

The Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal reports 43 Oregonians lost their lives due to fire in 2007. This is an increase from the 35 fire-related deaths in 2006 and the first increase in deaths since 2004. Overall in 2007, Oregon experienced 11.5 fire deaths per million population. This is slightly below the national average of 12.4 fire deaths per million population.

“Although Oregon’s fire death rate is below the national average it’s still unacceptable,” says Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal Randy Simpson. “This office, along with the entire Oregon fire service, remains committed to reducing the tragic loss of life from fire. However, because most fires are preventable, all Oregonians also have responsibility for keeping themselves and their families safe from fire.”

Home fires resulted in 60% (26) of the fire deaths. Vehicle fires killed fifteen people and 2 others died in outdoor fires unrelated to structures or vehicles. Statistics also showed that children 17 years old and younger and elderly people 65 and older represent 44% of the fatalities. “Typically, these are the most vulnerable populations least able to escape from a fire before toxic smoke and heat overcome them,” says Simpson.

Forty-eight percent of the fatalities (21) occurred in homes that did not have a smoke alarm or the alarm was not working.

The Office of State Fire Marshal encourages all Oregonians to observe these fire safety tips:

- Install and maintain working smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area and in every bedroom.

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- Replace smoke alarms 10 years old or older.
- Never disconnect or remove batteries from smoke alarms for other uses.
- Plan and practice a fire escape drill twice a year. Know how to get out of your residence quickly.
- Keep combustible materials, such as paper, clothing, and curtains, away from sources of ignition, such as heaters and candles.
- Extinguish all candles before leaving a room or falling asleep.
- When cooking, never leave the stove unattended.

For more fire safety information, visit:

http://www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/CommEd_InfoandBrochures.shtml

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