



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **(Got Fireworks? Keep it Legal, Keep it Safe)**

With temperatures heating up and fireworks now on sale in Oregon and soon Washington (June 28<sup>th</sup>), Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue is gearing up for an increase in activity. On average, the Fire District responds to approximately 50 firework fires each year – the majority of which happen in a two week period. To keep you and your family safe from fire, injury and/or penalties, remember the following:

#### **Keep It Legal**

Oregon law bans fireworks that fly, explode, or move across the ground more than six feet. Fireworks purchased by mail order or in the state of Washington or on Native American reservations may be illegal in Oregon. This includes popular items such as bottle rockets, roman candles, firecrackers, and M80s. To keep it legal, purchase all fireworks at a licensed Oregon firework stand.

Under Oregon law, law enforcement officers can seize illegal fireworks and you can be fined up to \$500 per violation and/or arrested. It's also important to remember that you can be held civilly liable for damages resulting from improper use of any fireworks - legal or illegal. Oregon law also makes parents liable for damage caused by their children and allows fire departments to charge for the cost of suppressing fires caused by fireworks.

In an effort to curb illegal firework activity, TVF&R firefighters will conduct neighborhood drive-bys on the Fourth of July. In addition, Deputy Fire Marshals will be riding with law enforcement units to support their enforcement efforts.

#### **Keep It Safe**

It is a common misconception that legal fireworks are less risky.

- Only adults should light or handle fireworks.
- Supervise children at all times when fireworks are being used.
- Store fireworks, matches, and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Use fireworks outdoors on a paved surface, away from buildings, vehicles, and vegetation. Never point or throw fireworks at people, pets, or buildings.
- Never pick up or try to re-light a "dud."
- Never alter fireworks or make your own. Homemade explosives can be deadly.
- Have a hose or bucket of water nearby to douse misfired and spent fireworks, and to extinguish potential fires. *One of the most common fires that TVF&R responds to involves "spent" fireworks placed in a bucket or grocery sack that rekindle and ignite personal property during the night.*

Individuals concerned about neighbors using fireworks are reminded that Fourth of July festivities result in increased activity for all public safety agencies, i.e., crowd control, fires, traffic issues, etc. Because resources are limited, priority must be given to truly hazardous situations. Individuals with a fire or medical emergency should call 9-1-1; other situations should be reported via the **non-emergency** 9-1-1 number. Situations without a specific address or threat to life or property will be responded to as resources allow.

For information, visit Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue's website at [www.tvfr.com](http://www.tvfr.com).

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