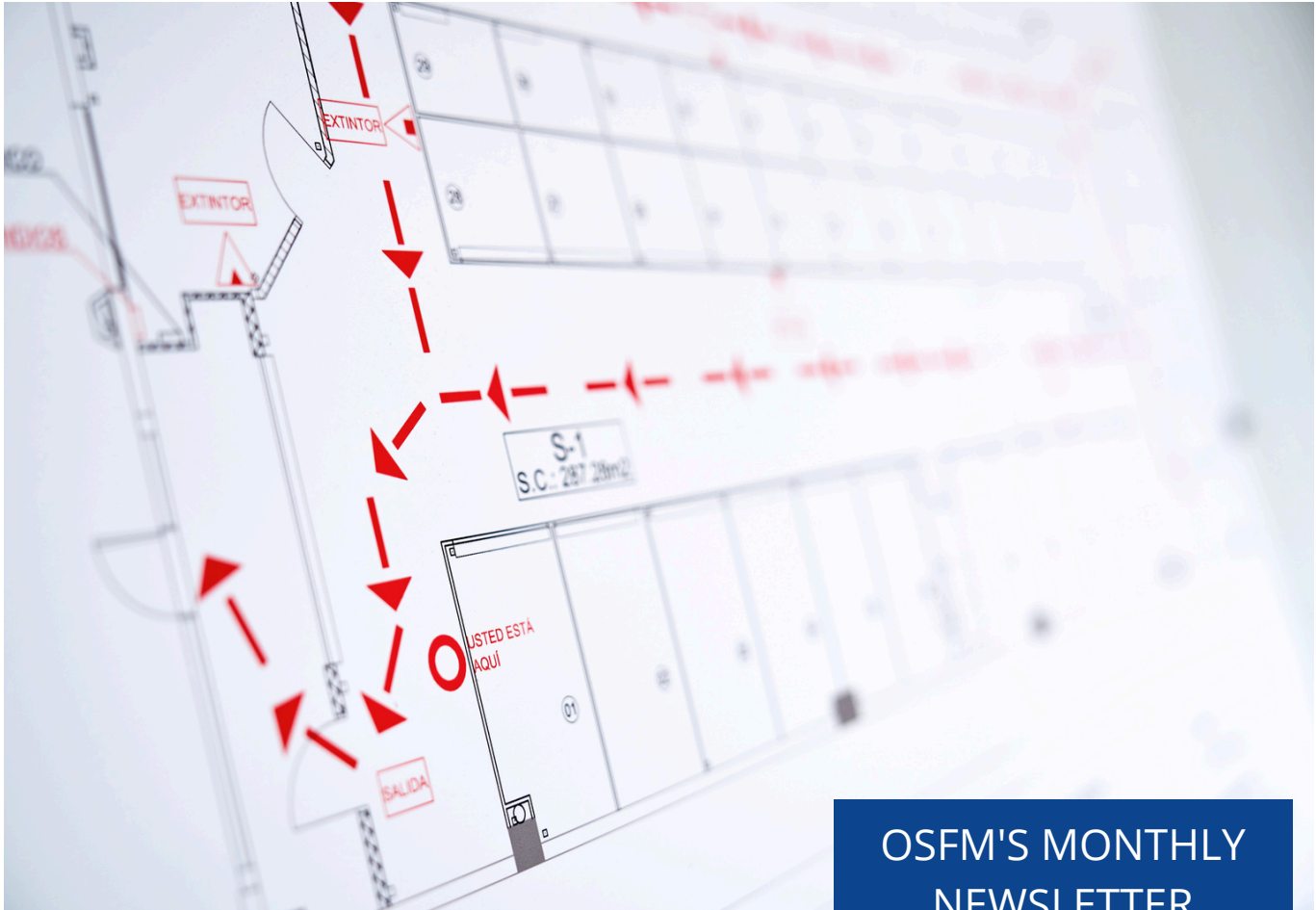




OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THE GATED WYE

MARCH 2025



FOCUS ON FAMILY FIRE SAFETY IN MARCH

This March, the Oregon State Fire Marshal is focusing on youth fire safety, highlighting important lessons often forgotten. It's crucial that children understand that fire is a tool for adults, not a toy. Practicing a home fire escape plan is also important—everyone should know how to get out safely, especially in an emergency.

Inside, you'll find essential tips for creating a home escape plan, teaching kids how to exit independently, and ensuring everyone knows how to respond in a fire.

OSFM'S MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

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911
Emergency
Call

FOCUS ON **FIRE SAFETY** IN MARCH, PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

In March, the OSFM is focused on youth fire safety, highlighting important messages often forgotten when we talk about fire safety. Kids should know that adults can safely use fire as a tool for heating and cooking, and they should be prepared to escape a dangerous home fire. You can help them know what to do by including them in the creation of a home fire escape plan. Don't forget to Practice, Practice, Practice!

TIPS FOR YOUR FAMILY HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN:

- Make a home escape plan if you don't already have one.
- Draw a map of each level of your home.
- Show all doors and windows.
- Practice the plan with everyone in your home, including visitors.
- Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Make sure someone will help them.
- Teach your children how to escape on their own in case you cannot help them.
- Make sure kids can open windows, remove screens, and unlock doors.
- Have a plan for everyone in your home, especially those who have a disability.
- Know at least two ways out of every room if possible. Make sure all doors and windows that lead outside can open.
- Identify where smoke alarms are in your home.
- When you practice your escape plan, test your smoke alarms.

TIPS FOR CALLING 9-1-1

- Remember to call 9-1-1 only during an emergency.
- Calling 9-1-1 when there is no emergency could cause others to not get the help they need. It can also put firefighters in danger needlessly.

WHEN THE 9-1-1 DISPATCHER ANSWERS, TELL THEM:

- The type of emergency
- Your name
- The location you are calling from
- The telephone number from where you are calling
- Stay on the telephone until the dispatcher tells you to hang up.



OSFM PRESENTS BUDGET

The Oregon State Fire Marshal presented its budget to lawmakers in mid-February, emphasizing investments in community risk reduction, fire safety education, and emergency response. Fire officials and industry representatives testified in strong support of the budget, urging legislators to maintain funding for critical programs that protect communities across the state.

State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple addressed the Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety, highlighting the importance of prevention and preparedness efforts.

“Our mission is to protect people, property, and the environment from fire and hazardous materials,” Ruiz-Temple said. “By prioritizing community risk reduction, fire safety education, and emergency response, we can create a more resilient Oregon.”

The proposed budget for the 2025-27 biennium, totaling approximately \$106.3 million, includes funding for fire safety education initiatives, home fire prevention programs, and wildfire mitigation efforts. Investments in community risk reduction focus on proactive strategies such as defensible space assessments, public education campaigns, and support for local fire districts to enhance preparedness.

The Fire & Life Safety Education Division continues to expand outreach programs aimed at reducing fire fatalities and increasing public awareness. Programs like the Top Fire Causes and Fire & Fall Prevention for Older Adults provide essential resources to at-risk populations. The agency’s data-driven approach allows for targeted education efforts that address specific regional risks.

Emergency response remains a cornerstone of the fire marshal’s strategy, with significant investments in wildfire season staffing grants, pre-positioning resources ahead of wildfire season, and expanding the state’s mutual aid system. The governor’s recommended budget allocated \$5 million per year for the Wildfire Season Staffing Grant.

Chief Brian Stewart, representing the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association, emphasized the need for continued funding.

“If the staffing grant is reduced, we estimate that approximately 288 firefighter positions could be lost statewide,” Stewart said. “This program has been the most impactful tool the state fire marshal has implemented.”

The convening of the fire service has played a key role in shaping policy recommendations, bringing together fire service leaders to discuss challenges and solutions. The agency has actively engaged with local fire districts, tribal governments, and emergency responders to develop strategies that address evolving fire risks.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal continues to prioritize firefighter health and safety through the [Oregon Fire Service Health and Safety Collaborative](#). This initiative focuses on cancer risk reduction, behavioral health support, and improving safety conditions for fire service personnel. Fire Chief Ben Stange highlighted the importance of these efforts.

“Firefighters face significant health risks on the job, and the collaborative ensures we are taking proactive steps to protect their well-being,” Stange said.

Other testimony reinforced the agency’s comprehensive approach to fire protection, including hazardous materials response, fire code enforcement, and investments in modernizing emergency response technology. Genoa Ingram, representing the Oregon Fire District Directors Association and the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association, praised Ruiz-Temple’s leadership.

Ruiz-Temple also talked about the June 2024 [Convening of the Fire Service](#) where fire service leaders from around the state gathered at the OSFM’s headquarters to discuss the most pressing issues facing the fire service today. There are both legislative and non-legislative actions to modernize and stabilize the fire service’s capability to properly assist and protect all Oregonians.

“This administration has mastered the art of organization and efficiency,” Ingram said. “They listen, they act, and they bring all facets of the fire service together.”

The Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety is expected to deliberate further on Senate Bill 5538 in the coming weeks, with a final budget decision anticipated later this session.





OSFM HOSTS **BATTERY** RESPONSE AND SAFETY TRAINING COURSES

The final session in a statewide series of lithium-ion battery training courses wrapped up in mid-February, marking the successful completion of 11 classes that trained 251 students from 85 agencies. The program, designed to enhance understanding of battery technology and safety, received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants.

Throughout the course, students explored various aspects of lithium-ion batteries, including their chemistry, operation, transportation, and common uses in transit. A hands-on approach allowed participants to build a battery using everyday materials, reinforcing fundamental concepts.

One of the most striking demonstrations in the class highlighted the dangers of coin cell battery ingestion, a growing safety concern, particularly for children. Using a hot dog to simulate human tissue, instructors showcased how moisture can complete a circuit, leading to severe burn injuries in the esophagus. This visual representation underscored the importance of awareness and prevention.

The afternoon sessions focused on emergency response strategies for battery-related incidents, equipping students with essential knowledge to handle potential hazards during transportation and usage.

Funded through the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) grant, this training series has proven to be an invaluable resource for agencies across the state.



DPSST HOSTS WINTER FIRE SCHOOL

The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) hosted the 20th annual Winter Fire School at the Oregon Public Safety Academy in Salem. More than 200 firefighters from across the state participated in this premier training event, which featured eight National Fire Academy courses, four hands-on training exercises led by DPSST instructors, and a specialized vehicle extrication course conducted by Dallas Fire & EMS.

Winter Fire School provides critical, no-cost training designed to enhance firefighter skills and preparedness. By bringing together fire service professionals from various departments, the event fosters collaboration and knowledge-sharing that strengthens Oregon's overall emergency response capabilities.



SWEARING IN CEREMONY

In late February, the Oregon State Fire Marshal held a badge pinning ceremony where two members were sworn in. Evan Lemke serves in the Fire and Life Safety Division as a healthcare surveyor, and Darrin Witmer who serves in the Regulatory Services Division Community Right to Know Program. Congratulations!



HEY OREGON: LET'S TALK DEFENSIBLE SPACE

As winter begins to wane and spring approaches, February is an excellent time for Oregon homeowners to start planning defensible space projects around their properties. Creating and maintaining defensible space—the buffer zone between your home and the surrounding vegetation—is a critical step in reducing wildfire risk and protecting your home.

Why Start Now?

Planning in February allows ample time to assess your property, gather necessary materials, and implement changes before the peak wildfire season begins. Early action ensures that you're prepared and gives you the flexibility to tackle larger projects without the pressure of an imminent wildfire threat.

What Is Defensible Space?

Defensible space involves managing vegetation, debris, and other combustible materials to slow the spread of wildfire and provide a safe area for firefighters to operate. Key practices include:

- Removing dead vegetation and leaves.
- Trimming tree branches away from roofs and chimneys.
- Spacing plants and trees to prevent fire from spreading.
- Using fire-resistant landscaping materials.

Free Assistance from the Oregon State Fire Marshal

To make the process easier, the Oregon State Fire Marshal offers free defensible space assessments to homeowners. These assessments provide personalized recommendations tailored to your property's unique conditions. Fire experts will evaluate your home's surroundings and offer practical, actionable advice to improve your wildfire resilience.

How to Get Started

Scheduling a defensible space assessment is simple. Contact the Oregon State Fire Marshal to request an appointment. With its expert guidance, you can create a safer environment for your home while contributing to your community's overall wildfire preparedness.

GET COMFORTABLE WITH **DEFENSIBLE SPACE.**



FIVE SPRING PROJECTS TO CREATE DEFENSIBLE SPACE:

- 1** **Remove** leaves, pine needles, and other debris from the roof, gutters, and on and under the deck.
- 2** **Trim** tall plants and bushes growing directly under your eaves.
- 3** **Trim** trees and bushes to make sure they have adequate space from your home and other vegetation.
- 4** **Remove** dead and combustible plants and mulch, especially within the first several feet from the home. Replace with decorative rock or gravel.
- 5** **Cover** exterior attic vents, soffit vents, and areas below decks and patios with 1/8" metal wire mesh.

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP FOR
A **FREE DEFENSIBLE ASSESSMENT.**](#)





FIRST ANNUAL OREGON BURN CENTER SAFETY FAIR AND CHILI COOK-OFF A SUCCESS

The inaugural Oregon Burn Center Safety Fair and Chili Cook-Off brought together hundreds of community members on Sunday, Feb. 2, at the Portland Expo Center to raise awareness for National Burn Awareness Week. The event, hosted by the Oregon Burn Center at Legacy Emanuel, featured safety education, wellness resources, and a chili competition among local agencies.

The event drew approximately 500 people and included prevention tables from 12 organizations, along with 10 fire and public safety agencies competing in the cook-off. The Oregon State Fire Marshal participated with a prevention booth focused on cooking fire safety, where staff introduced a new pilot risk reduction kit designed to promote safer kitchen practices.

Burn prevention was the focus, with experts highlighting that one-third of burn injuries treated at the Oregon Burn Center involve children, many of whom suffer scald burns from hot liquids.

Community organizations provided information on injury prevention, emergency response, and wellness resources. Participating agencies included:

- Oregon Burn Center
- Oregon State Fire Marshal
- Trauma Nurses Talk Tough
- American Medical Response
- Randall Children's Hospital
- Bloodworks Northwest
- JoyRx: Children's Cancer Association
- Oregon Poison Center
- Portland General Electric
- Boys & Girls Club
- American Red Cross
- Chiro One Wellness Centers



OREGON **NERIS+** UPDATE

We are excited to share the latest progress on the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS+) project, which the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is developing in conjunction with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI). We have recently reviewed and submitted a list of NFIRS data elements that we aim to include in the NERIS+ system for Oregon, developed with valuable input from members of Oregon fire agencies and subject matter experts. This is an important milestone as we continue to plan for the development of the NERIS+ platform, training, and onboarding of Oregon agencies.

We are reviewing agency profile information to ensure it is up-to-date, complete, and accurate. This is being done in preparation to update agencies' profiles within the Oregon repository to ensure we are aligned with NERIS standards. *Please note, agencies do not need to take any action to onboard into the national NERIS system.* To assist us in keeping your information current, please complete the Annual Fire Profile Survey that was emailed to all agencies in February. Your input is essential for ensuring accurate data as we move forward in our preparation for NERIS+.

Stay tuned for further announcements in the coming weeks. We will provide more details about the development, timeline, training, and onboarding process for NERIS+, as well as what your agency can do to help prepare for next steps.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Analytics & Intelligence Unit at osfm.data@osfm.oregon.gov. In the meantime, please continue to submit your fire incident reports as normal using NFIRS. Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and support as we transition to NERIS+!

HAZMAT RESPONSE HIGHLIGHT



In early February, the Eugene Region 2 hazardous materials response team was called to a chlorine leak at the Springfield Utility Board water treatment facility in Springfield. The leak from a faulty valve prompted an immediate response from the team, which is made up of firefighters specially trained as hazardous materials technicians.

Thanks to the quick and coordinated response, the issue was taken care of with no threat to the public.

This successful response highlights the critical role of the Oregon State Fire Marshal's regional hazardous materials response program. The OSFM program equips and trains local firefighters across Oregon to handle hazardous materials incidents like this one.

Through specialized training and cross-agency partnerships, teams like Eugene Region 2 are able to respond effectively to potential threats, protecting public health and safety.



IT'S TIME TO NOMINATE FOR THE OSFM SPARKY AWARDS!

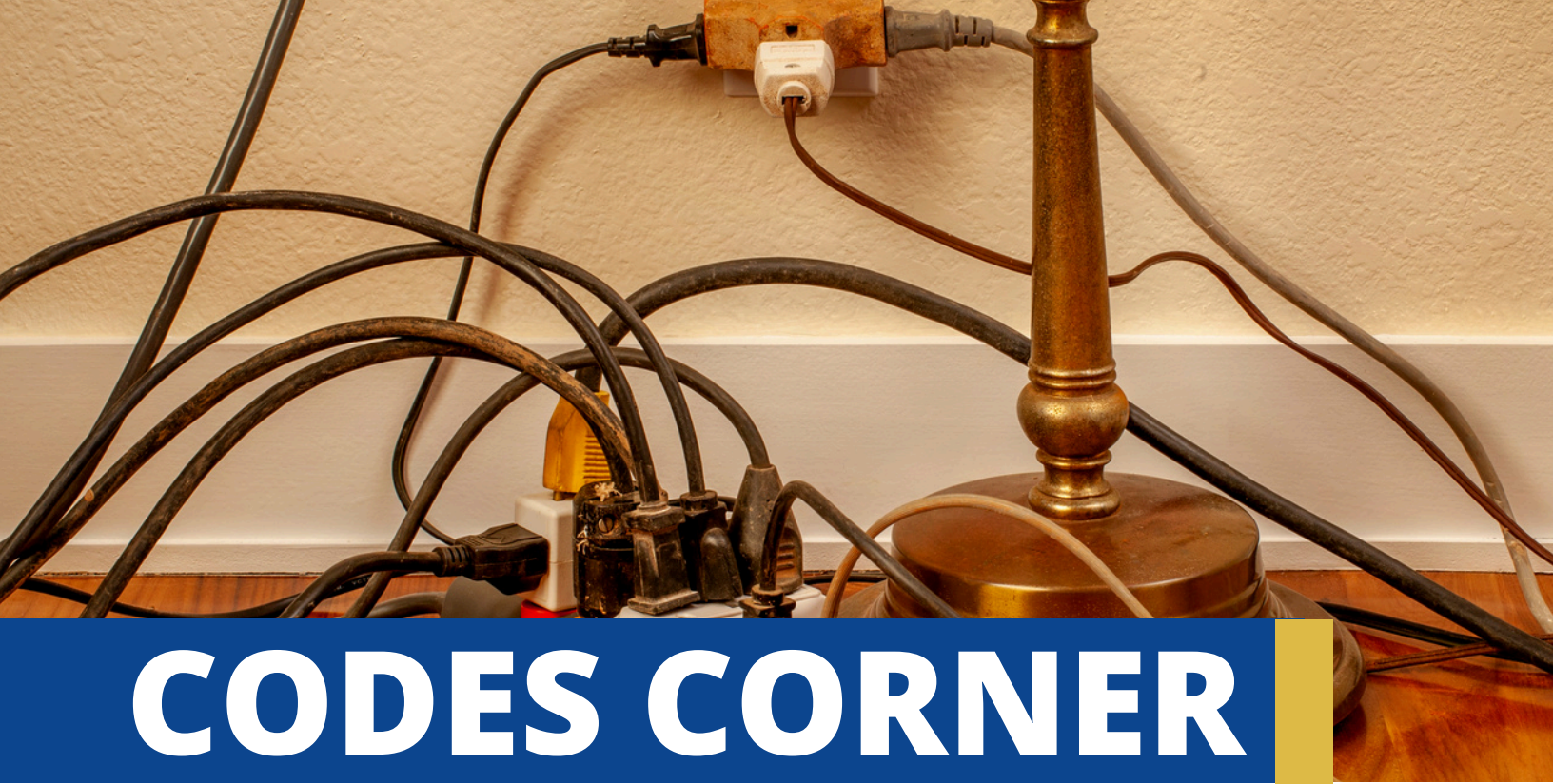
The Oregon State Fire Marshal is accepting nominations for the 2025 Golden and Silver Sparky Awards.

The Golden Sparky recognizes a fire service member or fire agency for outstanding fire prevention or public safety education achievement. The Silver Sparky recognizes a civilian or civilian agency for outstanding achievement in fire prevention or public safety education.

Nominations are open until May 1. Please submit your completed Sparky nomination form with an explanation and examples of your nominee's achievements.

To nominate someone, fill out and submit the form on the [OSFM's website](#).





CODES CORNER

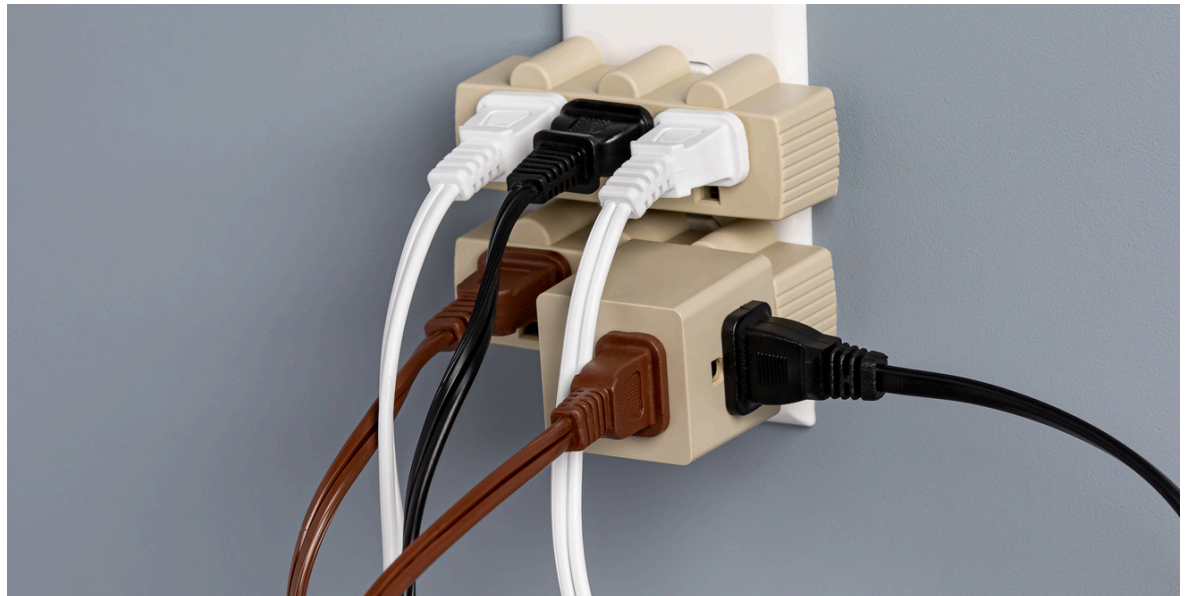
LET'S NOT GET OVERLOADED

The key to preventing an electrical overload is making sure you don't exceed your buildings electrical system's capacity with the devices you have plugged in. The 2022 Oregon Fire Code Section 603.5 outlines the use of relocatable power taps and current taps.

Relocatable power taps (RPTs), often called power strips, should be listed and labeled to meet the testing requirements outlined in UL 1363. These are applied to relocatable, cord-connected power taps rated at 250 volts AC or less and 20 amps or less. These devices are intended only for indoor use as a temporary extension of a buildings branch circuit for general use to supply home workshop tools, computers, audio and video equipment, etc. They consist of an attachment plug and a length of flexible cord terminating in an enclosure containing one or more receptacles and may also be provided with fuses or other supplemental overcurrent protection, switches, line surge suppressors or indicator lights.

The flexible cord length is dependent on the listing of the particular device, but RPTs have been listed and labeled for lengths up to 25 feet (7620 mm). A key item in the scope of UL 1363 is that RPTs should not be connected in series (daisy chained) or be used with medical equipment. Where RPTs are being used within the defined 6'-0" area around a care recipient, whether in a nursing home, hospital or ambulatory care facility, they must be listed and labeled to comply with UL 1363A or UL 60601-1. UL 1363A, like UL 1363, is limited to 250V AC or less but is specifically intended to be used with medical equipment such as monitors or other equipment that is pedestal mounted. It is important to note that general patient care areas or critical patient care areas are defined in NFPA 517 for healthcare facilities. These RPTs contain hospital-grade attachment plugs and hospital-grade outlets.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.



Another item frequently used is the current tap. Current taps are often termed multiplug adaptors. The testing requirements of UL 498A are applicable to current taps. UL 498A is limited to current taps rated to 200A and 600V. UL defines "current tap" as "a male and female contact device that, when connected to an outlet receptacle provides multiple outlet configurations." An adapter, on the other hand, is defined there as "a device that adapts one blade or slot configuration to another (including a grounding adapter for a non-grounding receptacle)." Essentially, current taps allow the use of a single outlet for multiple connections.

OFC Section 603.5.2 addresses the use and application of RPTs and current taps. RPTs are similar to those on extension cords (OFC Section 603.6). RPTs and current taps should not be used as a substitute for building wiring. RPTs and current taps are intended to be plugged directly into a permanently installed receptacle. RPTs are not intended to be connected in series or connected to other RPTs or extension cords. They are also not intended for use outdoors, at construction sites and at similar hard-use locations. For outdoor RPTs to be UL listed and labeled, they must meet the requirements of UL 2438 standard, which specifies the design and construction criteria for "W-rated" outdoor electrical equipment, including features like weatherproof enclosures and components capable of withstanding harsh environmental conditions; essentially, the "outdoor" designation on a UL listed RPT indicates compliance with UL 2438 standards.

Finally, to prevent use as a substitute for permanent wiring, power taps cannot be placed in locations such as within or through walls, under doors or on building surfaces, furnishings, cabinets or similar structures where they would be subject to physical damage. OFC Section 603.5 intends to prohibit relocatable power taps from being plugged into a receptacle in one room to power a device in another room.



CHALLENGE
YOURSELF

FIREFIGHTER **FITNESS** CHALLENGE

If you're a fire department member in the greater Portland area, please consider joining the 2025 Firefighter Fitness Challenge! This friendly fitness competition promotes physical fitness, encourages healthy lifestyles, and inspires comradery within fire departments.

Registration closes soon, so join today. Individuals and teams are eligible to win prizes, along with healthier habits! Click here to learn more.

[Find rules and guidelines here.](#)

[Informational flyer](#)

JOIN THE OSFM **SMOKE ALARM** INSTALLATION PROGRAM

Is your agency interested in joining the OSFM's Smoke Alarm Installation Program? The program provides smoke alarms to Oregon fire agencies to install in homes that are not adequately protected.

There are several opportunities to learn more about the program during free webinars. Participants will learn about program eligibility and requirements, smoke alarms and installation information, project planning and ideas, and safety materials available to order. The free one-hour live webinar training is required for fire agencies who wish to participate in the program. Click the dates to register.



[March 13, 2025](#)

[April 10, 2025](#)

If your department needs training at a different time, please contact us for alternate scheduling at 503-934-8228.



FROM THE INTERNET

Nestucca Rural Fire Protection District was hard at work completing essential safety tests to ensure top protection for both firefighters and the community.

- NFPA Hose Testing: Fire hoses are being tested for pressure integrity and reliability to ensure they perform when every second counts.
- SCBA Mask Testing: Firefighters' breathing apparatus masks are checked to guarantee full functionality, providing vital respiratory protection in hazardous conditions.

These tests are crucial to maintaining the highest safety standards, ensuring firefighters are always ready to respond effectively. Thank you for your continued support!

ICY TRAINING

During early February's deep freeze, Bend firefighters took advantage of the conditions to refresh their ice rescue skills. This hands-on training ensures they are prepared to respond quickly and effectively when someone falls through frozen water—a situation where every second counts.

Ice rescues require specialized techniques and equipment, and regular training helps firefighters stay sharp for these high-risk emergencies. Their goal is to save lives while keeping both victims and rescuers safe.



ANALYTICS & INTELLIGENCE Reporting Reminders

Has there been a fire related death or serious injury?

Please remember to submit a Fire Casualty Report Form (ORS 476.210). The form can be found at: [Fire Casualty Report Form](#)

**Note: the form must be completed by the primary responding fire agency and in addition to the NFIRS Fire Incident Report.*

Has there been a change in your agency's contact information or leadership?

If so, please remember to complete the appropriate contact update form found here: [Fire Agency Contact Update Forms](#)

Have a NFIRS question? Need Coding Help? Struggling with Elite?

If you need help related to incident reporting or the state repository, please reach out to the Fire Incident Reporting System Program Coordinator Michelle Vold.
(503-586-6568 | michelle.vold@osfm.oregon.gov)



CONTACT US

Have a story idea or something you would like to know more about?

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