

NEWSLETTER FOR
THE RESIDENTS OF
SPOKANE COUNTY
FIRE DISTRICT 8

Fire



Flyer

Summer 2020

As a cost-saving measure, Fire 8 Flyer is only being sent electronically this quarter. We encourage you to share this newsletter with friends, family and neighbors.



A Message from the Chief

Tony C. Nielsen

Greetings! Much has changed since our last newsletter, as we've rapidly shifted operations to meet the challenges of COVID-19. I'm exceptionally proud of the way our team adapted to new response, treatment, and isolation protocols to protect themselves and our community. Like many healthcare providers, we were initially challenged to find adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and are immensely grateful for those individuals and businesses that offered help. As of this writing, our call volume has risen over 14% and our EMTs and paramedics have treated over 70 suspected COVID-19 patients, with cases continuing to rise.

Now we are facing a second great challenge: Funding. Essentially all of the fire district's revenue comes from property taxes, which some of our friends and neighbors are struggling to pay, given the pandemic's impacts to our economy. The fire district is closely monitoring tax receipts and preparing contingency plans for potential deficits. Any revenue shortfalls will be a serious challenge for us to overcome, as we pride ourselves on being a lean organization that relies on a creative mix of full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff to deliver services. I've already directed staff to freeze all non-critical spending and we've halted all capital projects budgeted for the year. For example, this quarter's newsletter is only being sent electronically to save the costs of printing and mailing. **Moving forward, I will be engaging our elected fire commissioners, staff, and labor groups to come up with innovative solutions to sustain staffing and response at optimal levels and within the funds you've entrusted us.**

We are very appreciative of your support, particularly during these challenging times. If you have any questions or suggestions about how we can serve you better, please feel free to e-mail me at tnielsen@scfd8.org, or give me a call either at the office 509-926-6699 or at home 509-370-9801.



Wildfire Prep: Join forces with your neighbors and become a Firewise recognized community

Firewise USA® is a voluntary program that provides a framework to help neighbors get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and community

Join the growing network of more than 1,500 recognized Firewise USA® sites from across the nation taking action and ownership in preparing and protecting their homes against the threat of wildfire

How does a Firewise USA program work?

- **Organize it.** Form a board/committee that's comprised of residents and other applicable wildfire stakeholders — like SCFD8 and others. This group will collaborate on identifying the site's boundary and size.
- **Plan it.** Obtain a written wildfire risk assessment from SCFD8. The assessment identifies areas of successful wildfire risk reduction and areas where improvements could be made. Then, develop an action plan — a prioritized list of risk-reduction projects.
- **Do it.** Host an outreach event and work with neighbors on addressing items in the action plan. These efforts will go towards your site's annual wildfire risk reduction investment.

Get started now. For more information and resources regarding how you and your neighbors can create a Firewise Community, visit nfpa.org



What's Our Wildfire Risk Today? Find Out Now.

Summer is here and soon our fire danger will start to increase.

Check the current wildfire risk level at www.scfcd8.org or the fire-rating signs posted at each of our four fire stations.

Reduce Fire Risks in Your Home Ignition Zone ignition signs

Create a defensible space around your property

In 2018, wildfire tests at the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety Research Center show that creating and maintaining a noncombustible zone around a home or business can reduce risks. [Learn more.](#)

- **Fences:** Noncombustible fencing is key to hardening your home. Fences can offer a direct line for fire to spread to your home. Consider building or replacing your fence with noncombustible material.
- **Maintain roof and gutters:** Debris, including leaves and pine needles from nearby and over-hanging trees, will accumulate on roofs and in gutters. Dry debris can be ignited by wind-blown embers. Routinely remove debris from the roof and gutters, including around skylights.

Check your deck: How can you reduce the risk of wildfire right outside your door? Prep your deck. Check underneath your deck or patio. Embers can easily collect under there, so make sure to clear the area of any flammable items. Baskets, flower arrangements and other decorations are great to have on your deck or patio, but during fire season be sure to remove anything likely to ignite from these spaces around your home.



We Offer Free Defensible Space Assessments

At SCFD8, we maintain current CDC safety recommendations as we walk your property with you talking about ways you can help your home defend itself in event of a wildfire.

To schedule your free defensible space assessment, contact Martin Long, SCFD8 Division Chief, at mlong@scfd8.org or 509-926-6699.

Home Fire Safety Survey Visits Via Video

SCFD8 offers free home safety surveys via ZOOM.

We'll walk through your home identify potential hazards and advising on ways to make you home safer. Areas we survey include:

- General areas
- Check for working smoke alarms
- Check for working carbon monoxide detectors
- Discuss a home escape plan
- Kitchen — We'll check to see that flammable items are removed from the stove top

- Living/Family Room — We'll check to see that flammable items are at least 3 feet from space heaters and fireplaces
- Bedrooms — All bedrooms should have at least two ways out — through a window and out the door
- Garages — We'll check to see that gasoline and other fuels are stored properly

In addition, we'll develop a more comprehensive list to follow on the day we do the actual survey. To get started, you can follow this [online safety checklist](#).



Alert Spokane & Code Red

Your safety is our top priority and early notification of impending evacuation can be critical during an emergency. That's why we ask you to sign up with ALERT Spokane to receive evacuation notices when issued by the fire department or other agencies.

There are two easy ways to register for ALERT Spokane:

1. [Register online](#) and follow the simple instructions.
2. Or [download the CodeRed mobile app](#) and follow instructions for setup.

Users without Internet access may use a computer at their local library or have a friend or relative with access assist them in signing up [here](#).



Don't Be the Fall Guy

Reduce the chances of you or a family member accidentally falling in your home.

Here are 8 tips to help:

1. Get regular exercise to help build and maintain strength and improve your balance and coordination. Ask your doctor about the type of physical exercise that may be best for you based on your age and health.
2. Take your time — get out of chairs slowly. Sit a moment before you get out of bed. Stand and get your balance before you walk. Be aware of your surroundings.
3. Keep stairs and walking areas free of electrical cords, shoes, clothing, books, magazines, and other treasures.

4. Use nightlights or a flashlight to light the path between your bedroom and the bathroom. Turn on the lights before using the stairs. See an eye specialist once a year — better vision can help prevent falls.
5. Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors. Have grab bars installed on the wall next to the bathtub, shower, and toilet. Wipe up spilled liquids immediately.
6. Be aware of uneven surfaces indoors and outdoors. Use only throw rugs that have rubber, non-skid backing. Consider placing non-skid rug pads under rugs. Always smooth out wrinkles and folds in carpeting. Be aware of uneven sidewalks and pavement outdoors. Ask a family member or friend to clear ice and snow from outside stairs and walkways and always use hand rails if available. Step carefully.
7. Stairways should be well lit from both the top and the bottom. Have easy-to-grip handrails installed along the full length of both sides of the stairs.
8. Wear sturdy, well-fitting, low heeled shoes with non-slip soles. These are safer than high heels, thick soled athletic shoes, slippers, or stocking feet.

“SCFD8 would like to acknowledge and give a very special thank-you to F5 Networks for providing the district with face-shields – a pinnacle piece of PPE, that will help keep our first responders safe now and in the future.”

Tom Chavez, Medical Services Officer
Spokane County Fire District 8



COVID-19:

Reducing Fear and Anxiety

Uncertainty about what's going to happen with COVID-19 and its impact on everyone around you can have you feeling anxious and fearful

Whether you are concerned about your job or an elderly family member, getting food and supplies, or becoming sick yourself—you have an important goal: combat stress and stay calm. Here's how:

- **Practice self-care:** Focus on what you can control. Get more sleep, read a new book, have a warm bath, or take a walk somewhere quiet—whatever you do, now is the time to prioritize your well-being.
- **Limit social media use:** Set limits on how often you use social media, especially if you're at home where it's tempting to check in more often. Don't let a constant stream of tweets, status updates, and conflicting opinions overwhelm you.
- **Read only reliable news sources:** Stay informed by reading only reliable sources, such as government websites, the WHO, and the CDC. Other news sources may be less accurate, and they may arouse feelings of panic and concern.
- **Talk it out:** Acknowledge any stress or anxiety you're feeling and ask others how they're coping. Talk with family and friends. Check-in with elderly parents and relatives and make sure to see how children are feeling.

Reach out to coworkers: Now is the time for coworkers to come together. Focus on maintaining positive morale at work, and if you're working remotely, set regular meetings to add structure to your day.



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SCFD8 Proudly serves:

Moran Prairie, Glenrose, Hangman Hills, Valleyford, Bella Vista, Mica, Painted Hills, Ponderosa, Saltese

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Tony C. Nielsen, Fire Chief | Lee C. Boling, Greg Hesse, Andy Rorie, Commissioners

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