



Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Benton County Fire District 4 sounds alarm about wildland fire season

[West Richland, Wash.] – Benton County Fire District 4 and surrounding fire agencies are anticipating a busy wildland fire season for residents in the Tri-Cities area. The fire district is asking local residents to create a defensible space around their buildings in areas prone to brush or wildland fires to help reduce the risk to lives and property.

Property owners can take some simple steps to help firefighters extinguish wildland fires faster. Start with basic maintenance of your property. Clean leaves and needles out of gutters and off patios and decks. Move woodpiles away from your home or outbuildings and trim tree branches away from the ground.

The next step is to create a defensible space around buildings, which limits the amount of flammable materials surrounding your home and increases the moisture content of the remaining vegetation. Here are some resources for residents to find more information on how to create a defensible space:

Firewise Communities – www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness
Washington State Department of Natural Resources – www.dnr.wa.gov
National Interagency Fire Center – www.nifc.gov

Fire District 4 officials say that wildland fire season started a month early this year, and is expected to last longer than previous years due to higher temperatures and low water levels for the area. In 2014, emergency personnel from Fire District 4 responded to 43 brush and wildland fires, including those to assist surrounding agencies.

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Benton County Fire District 4 provides Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to 17,000 people over 52 square miles, including the City of West Richland. Approximately 36 volunteer and career Firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and six Paramedics respond to an average of 1,200 calls per year.