



Benton County Fire Protection District No. 4

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www.bcf4.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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These homeowners created a “defensible space” around the perimeter of their home, and survived a significant fire last summer.

Prepare for Wildland Fire Season Now

WEST RICHLAND, WASH. —Benton County Fire District 4 is asking residents and businesses in its service area to prepare for wildland fire season now. Rain and snow allow brush to grow and die off quickly in the spring, which provides fuel for wildland fires in the summer and fall months.

“Our ‘suburbs’ in Benton County border significant areas of brush and grassland. A few quick steps can reduce the risk of wildland fire on your property,” said Fire Chief Bill Whealan.

What a homeowner may regard as just an overgrown bush near their garage (or long grass in the yard) is actually a quick burning fuel source. And for firefighters, this could mean a long fight to save the home if this fuel source should ignite.

To begin, firefighters and apparatus cannot go into areas where they have no egress options. Provide good access to your home and/or shop for allowing firefighting vehicles the ability to get onto your property as well as be able to turn around and leave your property.

Firefighters also need to be able to locate you in case of a 911 call. Have your address posted on your driveway entrance as well as your house.

Creating a “fire barrier” to homes and outbuildings is critical. Some simple tips to protect structures are as follows:

- Maintain a 30-foot defensible space around your home.
- Keep lawns well-watered.
- Are there combustible trees or shrubs too close to your home? They may need to be pruned or removed.
- Clean gutters and roofs of any debris regularly.
- Screen off crawl spaces, attics and decks to keep them free of debris, as well as any flying embers.
- Do NOT store combustibles, such as wood piles, under your deck or near your home.

These are just basic recommendations to help emergency vehicles access your home and other structures and be resistant to wildland fires. More information can be found on Benton County Fire District 4's web site at www.bcf4.org under Fire Prevention & Safety.

Fire District 4 also offers a free home inspection service to provide tailored recommendations to create a defensible space. Interested parties can contact any on duty officer at (509) 967-2945.

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Benton County Fire District 4 is proud to provide fire and emergency medical service (EMS) to 18,232 people over 52 square miles, including the City of West Richland. The fire district operates under a balanced budget and maintains adequate reserve funds in case of an emergency. It also has a history of successfully passing financial and accountability audits by the state. Learn more about Fire District 4 at www.bcf4.org, “Like” us on Facebook at /BCFD4 or follow us on Twitter @BCFD4Info.