



DISTRICT 6 DISPATCH

“Serving the upper Methow Valley from Gold Creek to Lost River” Winter 2014

Message from the Chief



With a new year upon us, we would like to say thank you for supporting Okanogan County Fire District 6. Your tax dollars are crucial to funding emergency services in the Methow Valley, which is why we feel it is important to update you about what we do to keep your family and property safe.

Safety is important not only for our community, but also for our volunteer firefighters who respond to emergency calls. We need to make sure there are enough volunteers for their safety as well as your own. Our volunteers also deserve a safe operating environment from which to respond to emergencies.

Electrical Safety

Electricity is such an integral part of our daily lives that we often forget just how dangerous it can be. Take a minute to ask yourself a few questions:

- Are all electrical cords in good condition, not frayed or cracked?
- Are outlets overloaded in your home? Shop? Barn?

Unfortunately, the current Winthrop fire station fails on both counts.

Washington's Department of Labor and Industries found six clearance issues between engines and personnel that create unsafe working conditions for firefighters at this station. These safety concerns are well-known and have impacted our ability to recruit and retain volunteers. There are currently 11 volunteers that respond from the Winthrop station, down from a high of 21 volunteers in 2007. This is problematic for everyone in the Methow since all volunteers in the District operate as one fire department and respond from every station.

Even if we could recruit more volunteers, there is no place to put their gear. In fact, it would make a crowded situation even more dangerous.

The current building and site cannot accommodate the changes

needed to correct these issues.

In response, District 6 has been working on plans to build a new station on property it owns on Lower Horizon Flats Road. Initial cost estimates for the station came back too high last year, so we are working with a new architect on revised plans to reduce costs. We expect to have new cost estimates to share with you later this spring.

Ninety percent of our emergency responders are volunteers. Their contribution saves our taxpayers \$2.3 million annually in personnel costs. Our fire district couldn't function without them, and they deserve a safe working environment.

We will continue to update you about plans to build a new station as information becomes available. In the meantime, we wish you and your family the best of health, safety and prosperity in the New Year.

Sincerely, Chief Don Waller

- Are electrical cords kept from beneath furniture and rugs?
- Do all outlets and switches work properly?

In case of fire, always call 9-1-1 BEFORE you try to put the fire out.

Never use water to put out an

electrical fire, you could get shocked. For small fires, turn the power off and use a multipurpose ABC dry-chemical extinguisher to put the fire out. If you can't turn the power off or the fire is large, evacuate the area and dial 9-1-1 from a safe place. Once you exit a burning structure, don't go back inside.



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Protecting our Community



Vehicle Extrication Training with the new tools. A \$62,700 FEMA grant allowed OCFD6 to purchase two new sets of hydraulic rescue tools. One set for the Twisp station and one set for the Winthrop station.

The 40 volunteers of the Carlton, Twisp, Winthrop, and Mazama stations of OCFD6 responded to 238 calls in 2013.

All totaled, the volunteers logged 1,716 response hours and 3,002 training hours. A typical volunteer responds to between 20 - 100 emergency calls annually and spends approximately 2.5 to 3 hours on each of those calls.

Our volunteers sacrifice meals, family events, social events, sleep, and work in order to respond.

OCFD6 firefighters also support other organizations. They participated in the Liberty Bell Booster Club Mini Golf Tournament, the firefighter stair climb to benefit blood cancer research, and a visit to the MV Teen Center to provide hands on learning about firefighting equipment.

Although each volunteer is unique in their daily lives, all 40 are united in their commitment to protect and serve our Valley.

For information on becoming a volunteer firefighter contact Division Chief Brian McAuliffe at 996-2227 ext. 3 or bmcauliffe@okanogancountyfd6.com or our website at: www.okanogancountyfd6.com