

# FIRE HAZARDS & YOUR BUILDINGS

Fires are the leading cause of large property losses for the SDIS program. We have compiled the following preventative tips for your district to help limit the chance of fires.

## Accidental Fires

An effective preventative maintenance program and enhanced staff awareness can help to lessen the risk of accidental fires.

- Ensure that combustible material is not stored in front of or on top of equipment with the capacity to generate heat. Such equipment includes wall heaters, portable heaters, transformers and electrical panels.
- SDIS does not recommend the use of portable heaters because of the high risk of fire. If portable heaters are allowed in your buildings, they should be UL listed, have tip over protections and should only be used when staff is present in the room.
- Electrical systems should be inspected on a regular basis to verify that the system is in good working condition and not overloaded. Loose wires, overloaded circuits and damaged electrical cords or power strips are common electrical fire hazards.



## Intentional Fires

These fires are often triggered by arson or reckless burning (playing with fire without malicious intent).

- Ensure that combustible material is not stored against your building or under building eaves. Materials that are often stored near buildings and are used as fuel to start fires include dumpsters, recycling bins, pallets, cardboard, portable toilets and other burnable materials. Ideally, this combustible material should not be stored within 20 feet of the building.
- Secure all rooms and facilities on your property when staff are not present.
- Work with your local fire and police authorities to make regular trips past your buildings during off hours. This keeps traffic around and through your properties and helps with supervision during times when staff may not be present.

Remember, if you have a fire, you are required by ORS 476.210 to report it to your local fire authority. Report every fire, every time, any size and anywhere. Your local fire authority is also a great resource to tap into when identifying likely fire hazards in your buildings. Any questions or requests for assistance can also be directed to your SDIS Risk Management Department at [riskmanagement@sdao.com](mailto:riskmanagement@sdao.com) or 800-285-5461.