

PF&R Unveils New 'Watch Your Butt' Campaign Against Careless Smoking/Cigarette Litter

On March 30, 2016, Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman and Portland Fire & Rescue Chief Erin Janssens released the bureau's new aggressive prevention campaign: Watch Your Butt. Though the campaign's tagline is playful, the topic it covers is not: careless smoking and cigarette litter are the number one cause of fires and fire deaths in Portland.

In the city of Portland, we had 3,117 confirmed fires and over 1,400 of them were smoking related. In 2015, Portland had 11 fatalities from fire: the highest number of deaths in 18 years. Of the 11 deaths, five were from either careless smoking, or improperly disposed of smoking material. The goal with PF&R's new program is to prevent tragedies like these from occurring in the future.

PF&R hopes Watch Your Butt attracts the public's attention and makes smokers take a second to consider what can happen if they aren't careful and don't dispose of their cigarettes properly.

To get the message out, PF&R had drink coasters made up for bars to use and posters were made to share with any business that sells cigarettes or sees cigarette litter as a problem.

Beginning May 2nd, we're taking this message to billboards and bus tails across the city. Community members can download their own poster, learn more about the dangers, and find out more about this issue at www.WatchYourButt.com.

PF&R keeps a close focus on prevention: by doing inspections, plan reviews, and educational outreach, the bureau works hard to make sure bad things don't happen in the first place. Fire Chief Erin Janssens believes prevention is one of the main functions of a successful fire department.

“This focus, for me, comes from years of responding to fires throughout my career and seeing the devastation that occurs when people lose a family member, their pets, their homes, an irreplaceable photo or other mementos that can’t be replaced. All are all life-shattering,” Janssens says. “Once you experience a fire, you’re never the same. We want to keep our city and our community safe. With your help -- together -- we can make a difference.”