



EMPLOYMENT AND TENANT BACKGROUND CHECKS



July 2, 2024

Oregon Heat Warning

Some Tips for Manufactured Home Communities to Keep Your Residents Safe During this Weekend's Heat Wave

Another brutal heat wave will hit our region starting this weekend. Temperatures are expected to reach 100 degrees and exceed three days in a row. With evening temperatures not expected to dip below 70, this event could again be deadly to many populations including residents in manufactured homes. The "Oregonian" published an article on the number of heat deaths resulting from a previous heat wave. **The article is posted below - it is a good time to review.**

Check with your county for cooling centers, splash pads, and libraries - each county will have different resources available. There are lots of resources available at the local and county level.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, this is the time for people to look out for one another. If you have a resident, friend, neighbor, or family member who is isolated, without air conditioning, or at risk during this period, please check in on them and share this information.

Oregonian Article: Oregon data shows disturbing number of heat wave deaths at mobile home parks

Records released by the state Friday show that one in five of the heat-related deaths that occurred during Oregon's late June heat wave were of people who lived in mobile home parks, an analysis by The Oregonian/OregonLive found.

While 63% of the 96 deaths for which the state disclosed new information including addresses were in Portland, many of the mobile home park deaths occurred outside of Oregon's largest city. Single heat-related deaths of people living in mobile homes or RV parks were reported in Estacada, Scappoose, Clackamas, Fairview, Clatskanie, Woodburn, Salem, Hermiston, Forest Grove and Molalla. In Albany, there were two.

At least five occurred in Portland, three of them in outer southeast Portland mobile home parks and two in the same mobile home park in Cully in Northeast Portland, Cedar Shade.

Two took place at Altramar Mobile Home Park in Milwaukie, which serves people 55 and older.

Neighbors of Kent Christman, who lived alone in a pastel-colored doublewide home in that community, were informed by his family that he died from heat-related complications during the heat wave. On Friday afternoon, the home was quiet and uninhabited. Through the windows, few hints of Christman's life remained -- furniture and houseplants, dry and wilting from the heat.

"He was a very nice man and a good neighbor," said Sandra Garten, 69, who lives next door. A large outdoor thermometer hung from Garten's home, marking 82 degrees on Friday, though she worried about the next heat wave expected to come.

Garten said Christman had a working air conditioner in his home, but she said he didn't turn it on as the temperature reached 116 degrees. She said that made his death even more troublesome.

"My kids kept calling me to make sure I was OK during the heat wave," Garten said. "I was fine because I have two a/c window units ... I checked on my neighbors who I worried about, but I didn't check on Kent because he had his wits about him."

Around the corner from Christman, another neighbor, Fred Fah, also died during the heat wave. Fah lived alone, according to neighbor George Temple. On Friday, his Toyota Corolla sat unused in his driveway, covered in dust, and a package with Fah's name on it sat on his small porch.

"I feel really bad (about his death)," said Temple, 60. "If I had known he didn't have a/c, I would have offered to buy him one. The third-party rumor from other neighbors is that his church and family both offered to buy him a/c, but he said no and then the heat spell happened."

The information released Friday was made public after The Oregonian/OregonLive and other media sought public records to independently analyze the circumstances of individual deaths. The state and Multnomah County medical examiner denied media requests for the victims' names, addresses, ethnicities and dates they were found deceased, arguing privacy rights outweighed public interest in disclosure. However, the Oregon Attorney General's Office and, later, the Multnomah County district attorney granted the media outlets' appeals, citing the importance of the public learning more about the circumstances of preventable deaths.

"Disclosure will help inform the public about the impact of this historic event on affected communities, help the public assess the government's preparedness and responsiveness, and facilitate the development of appropriate public policies that anticipate future extreme climate events," the order said. It was signed by Deputy Attorney General Frederick M. Boss.

Temperatures in the Portland area are forecast to reach 100 degrees late next week and to hit 104 in Hermiston, according to the National Weather Service.

Terry McDonald, executive director for the nonprofit St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, said he didn't know if state or local officials pushed to warn residents of mobile homes about the risks ahead of the heat wave. But said his organization worked to inform residents of its own parks about the resources available to them in case of extreme heat.

"A pre-1976 mobile home has very little insulation, and they are very likely to be non-air conditioned," McDonald said. "So it's very likely they're at risk."

Mobile homes built prior to 1976 were not subject to regulations, McDonald said, and were initially meant to be temporary housing. He said there are about 40,000 such occupied units in Oregon.

The Oregonian/OregonLive's analysis found that problems first identified by Multnomah County occurred at an even greater magnitude across the state. County officials last month released a preliminary report noting that 18% of the local victims lived in mobile homes, recreational vehicles or automobiles. Statewide, that rate was 22%, the newsroom analysis found.

Michelle Hamrick, who was watering the flowers outside of her parents' home at Altramar Mobile Home Park on Friday, said the threat of more extreme weather events worries her. While her parents had air conditioning during the first heat wave, the bout of hot weather caused it to break. While they wait for a repair – repairs that are out of their budget – family members bought her parents a portable a/c unit to get them through any remaining hot days.

"Quite a few people were impacted here," Hamrick said. "There are many people on fixed incomes who don't have a/c at this park. There isn't a lot of outside assistance for residents here and many are elderly and stubborn, very independent."

Hamrick said other extreme weather episodes have also had dire impacts on Altramar residents. During the extreme winter storm, the park lost power for five days.

"That was a little terrifying," she said. "These things are impacting a lot of elderly people. I think we all thought it was the houseless population that would be impacted most, but it is people who live on their own with little resources."

Across the state, at least six individuals who were homeless died from heat-related causes during the heat wave, compared to 19 people who were living in mobile home parks.

In the far-eastern stretches of southeast Portland, Robert Fackler was found dead on July 7 in his home in American Mobilodge Mobile Home Park at Southeast Division Street and 170th Avenue. His neighbors said he didn't interact much with them and didn't have an air conditioner.

"He was a loner, hard of hearing and kept to himself," said Molly Walmer, 48, who lived across the street from him. "Someone came once a week to take him shopping, but other than that he was alone."

Walmer and her husband have air conditioning but still struggled through the heat wave. They can barely afford to pay the electric bill during the summer as they both live on Social Security. They keep their front door open during the evenings and set up fans to blow cool air in and only turn on air conditioning once the heat becomes unbearable. They planted a tree two years ago to create shade over their front door.

Denver Curtis, who lived a few doors down from Fackler, described him as a "nice old man."

While Curtis installed central air conditioning in his home, many of his neighbors don't have the same luxury. He said he thinks the state should help low-income people access that same resource.

"This is a retirement park and a lot of people here need help," he said. "These homes get really hot without air, and the state should come in and help people get air conditioning who can't afford it."

McDonald, the Lane County St. Vincent de Paul leader, said pre-1976 mobile homes are the largest non-publicly subsidized source of affordable housing for low-income people.

“In terms of vulnerable populations — the ones who often end up being homeless -- this particular type of housing is an impending problem for Oregon and around the country,” he said. “Until we come up with a replacement strategy for that substantial number of units, we will continue to have an inflow into homeless populations across the state.”

Mayra Torres, the community engagement coordinator with the neighborhood nonprofit Living Cully, said she was aware of one of the two Cully residents at the mobile home park who died from the heat. She said many residents didn’t have any cooling systems in their homes other than fans — which she later learned can be ineffective.

“I came to learn afterward that if you don’t have any cooling in your home and you have a fan, you’re essentially blowing all the hot air into your face, and it does more harm than good, given the temperatures we were experiencing during the heat wave,” Torres said.

Heat-related deaths didn’t occur just in low-income pockets of the city, however. Deaths occurred in recently built single-family homes, well-maintained apartment complexes on tree-lined streets in middle-class neighborhoods and in both low-rise and high-rise public housing run by Home Forward, the largest provider of affordable housing in the state. At least five deaths were in Home Forward buildings.

There is little information about circumstances of the deaths of the individuals experiencing homelessness who died during the extreme heat. A few were living in the vehicles, which often have little airflow.

Still, many heat-related deaths occurred along with those of homeless individuals, including a woman in her 40s who died in a manicured two-story home on a quiet street in southeast Portland.



Employment & Tenant Screening
Hire The Pros!
Call: 1 (800) 341-0022
www.orcainformation.com



FOLLOW US



Questions? Contact us today 1-800-341-0022

[Manage Your Subscription](#)

This message was sent to jan@orcainfo-com.com from admin@orcainfo-com.com

Orca Information
120 E. George Hopper Rd. #108
Burlington, WA 98233

