

Message from the Winchester Hills Fire Chief

Hello Friends and Neighbors,

As we enter this new round of “legal fireworks” period. I would like to remind everyone that there are no legal fireworks in Winchester Hills or the Ledges. These are not my rules (but I do support them). They come down to us through various state agencies who have jurisdiction in these matters. Over the Fourth of July holiday I witnessed several foolish and selfish individuals violate these laws. Since then we have been under “Red Flag” conditions over much of the southern portion of the state. For those of you that don’t know that means, fire danger is **very** high!

At approximately 8:45 am on the Fourth of July the Winchester Hills Fire Department was paged to a fire at the shooting range north of Winchester. Some individuals decided it would be great fun to shoot an exploding target. (I do normally support this activity, but you can’t do it when we are under these conditions!) Although this did not result in a fire (this time) it still produces a huge fireball and exploding targets have started many fires in the state. **This type of target is currently illegal to shoot due to the dry conditions.**

At 11:30 pm on the Fourth of July the Winchester Hills Fire Department responded to a wildland fire on the Snow Canyon overlook just north and west of Winchester Hills. Some incredibly foolish individuals decided it would be a great venue to light some illegal aerial fireworks... The wind was blowing northwest that night at around 5-7 mph. The wind thankfully blew the flames back into the rocks at the bottom of the cliffs and forced the fire to spread laterally and allowed us to get containment of the fire and ultimately put it out. We were lucky that the weather cooperated or we could have burned everything between Snow Canyon and Pine Mountain... Our volunteer firefighters were out until after 2:00 am (on a work day) extinguishing this fire!!!

Due to the highly dangerous conditions I would like everyone to know that **anyone who lights fireworks in Winchester Hills is violating the law.** If you witness anyone lighting fireworks you should report it along with the address to

911. After all, they are, endangering everyone's lives and property not just their own. Anyone who is caught lighting fireworks in Winchester Hills or the Ledges will receive a citation. Any fire caused by these acts is the sole responsibility of the person who lights them (whether by "accident" or not) and you will be held responsible for all of the damage and extinguishment costs of any fire you start. I should also warn you that if you start a fire while breaking the law it is likely that your insurance company has the right to refuse to pay on that claim. Not surprising to me, after all, you *were* breaking the law!

Anyone caught shooting exploding targets (if I have anything to say about it) will also receive a citation.

If you have legal fireworks you would like to light with your family please make sure you find a legal area to light them in and, be safe while doing it.

Enjoy your holiday!

Please recreate safely and responsibly!

Safety is everyone's responsibility!

Best Regards,

Don Christensen

Winchester Hills Fire Chief