

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT Bellevue Fire Prevention



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# Message from the Fire Marshal



**Travis Ripley**  
Fire Marshal

These days we get many questions about batteries. With battery technology constantly evolving, new products continue to flood the market. Everything from cars, scooters, laptops, and household drills are running off batteries. And though these batteries continue to make life easier, and more efficient, we want to take precautions when disposing of them.

Throwing batteries in regular household garbage or recycling is discouraged since they can start a fire or leak chemicals, such as mercury, lead, cadmium, and sulfuric acid. Another option is to recycle them in specific battery recycling drop-off locations. Two simple ways to find a location near you is by using 1-800-RECYCLE or [Call2Recycle.org](https://www.call2recycle.org).

There are many locations to drop-off batteries for free including Home Depot, Lowe's, and the King County household hazardous waste in Factoria.

Before dropping your batteries off, here are some safe ways to store your batteries.

- Cover the terminals of waste lithium batteries to reduce the potential for fires.
- Segregate batteries by type. Some recyclers will not accept containers of mixed waste batteries.

Help us keep batteries from being a fire risk or risk to the environment.

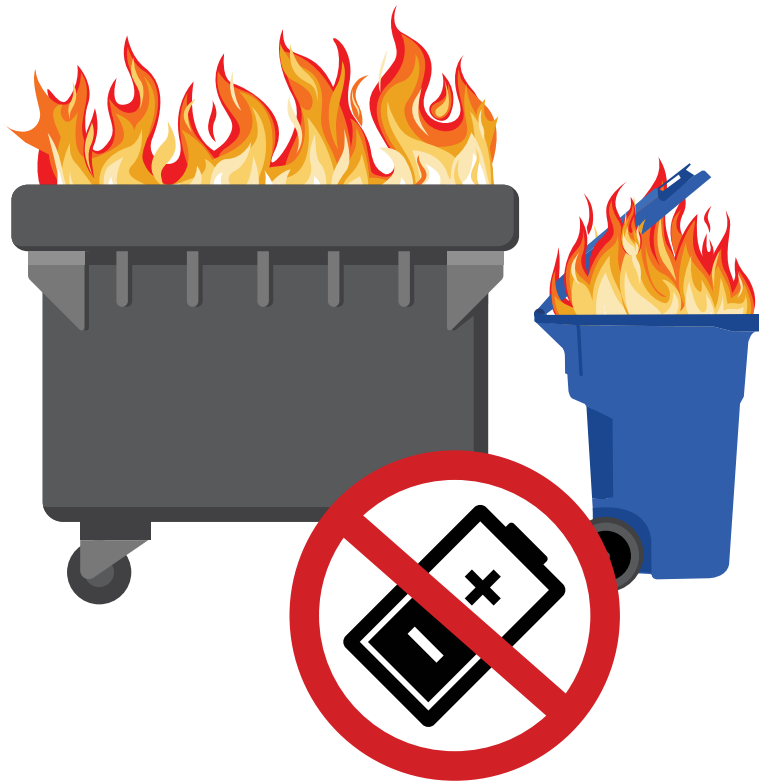


Travis Ripley,  
Fire Marshal  
Bellevue Fire Department



## DISPOSE OF BATTERIES SAFELY

Improperly discarded batteries  
can cause fires.



# Fire Prevention

## Organizational Chart

### Fire Marshal:

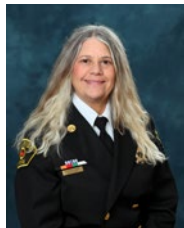


Travis Ripley

### Assistant Fire Marshals:



Kyle Nelson  
Maintenance  
Team



Kathy Baker  
Development  
Services Team

### Support Staff:



Jackie  
Cottom  
Program  
Analyst



Amanda  
Winkler  
Administrative  
Assistant

### Maintenance Fire Prevention Officers:



Ron King\*



Patrick  
Hamilton



Justin  
Thornton\*



Vincent  
Stroud\*



Cayla Ji



Maggie  
Whittemore\*



Jameal  
Hampton\*

### Development Services Fire Prevention Officers:



Dennis  
Warner



Stephen  
Sexton\*



Keith  
Gordon



Anna  
Mickols



Patrick  
Robinson



Deane  
Walker



Shelley  
Jin\*\*

\*ODI = On Duty Investigator

\*\*Plan Review

In 2023, Bellevue Fire Prevention saw substantial staffing changes, marking a year of growth and renewal. Five new Fire Prevention Officers, two Assistant Fire Marshals, and a new Administrative Assistant joined the team, bringing diverse skills and fresh perspectives. Some roles were filled through internal promotions, while others were recruited externally, enhancing the organization’s capacity to serve the community effectively and efficiently. This organizational chart reflects the culmination of these efforts, showcasing a team of dedicated professionals committed to advancing Bellevue Fire Prevention’s mission of achieving a safe, vibrant, and economically sustainable city.

## 2023 Hires, Transfers and Promotions

**FIRE PREVENTION OFFICERS:**

- Vincent Stroud – 01/03/23
- Cayla Ji – transferred from DS - 01/16/23
- Anna Mickols – transferred from DS - 01/16/23
- Maggie Whittemore – 01/23/23
- Patrick Robinson – 06/26/23
- Jameal Hampton – 06/26/23

**NEW ASSISTANT FIRE MARSHALS:**

- Kathy Baker – 08/14/23
- Kyle Nelson – promoted from FPO to AFM – 08/01/2023

**NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:**

- Amanda Winkler – transferred from Human Resources to Fire - 10/01/23

Plan Review

Fire Plan Examiners evaluate construction documents and fire protection system designs to ensure that the minimum fire codes and standards are consistently applied.

Maintenance Fire Prevention Officers

Fire Prevention staff inspect existing buildings to ensure fire/life safety systems are being maintained in accordance with all applicable codes and standards.

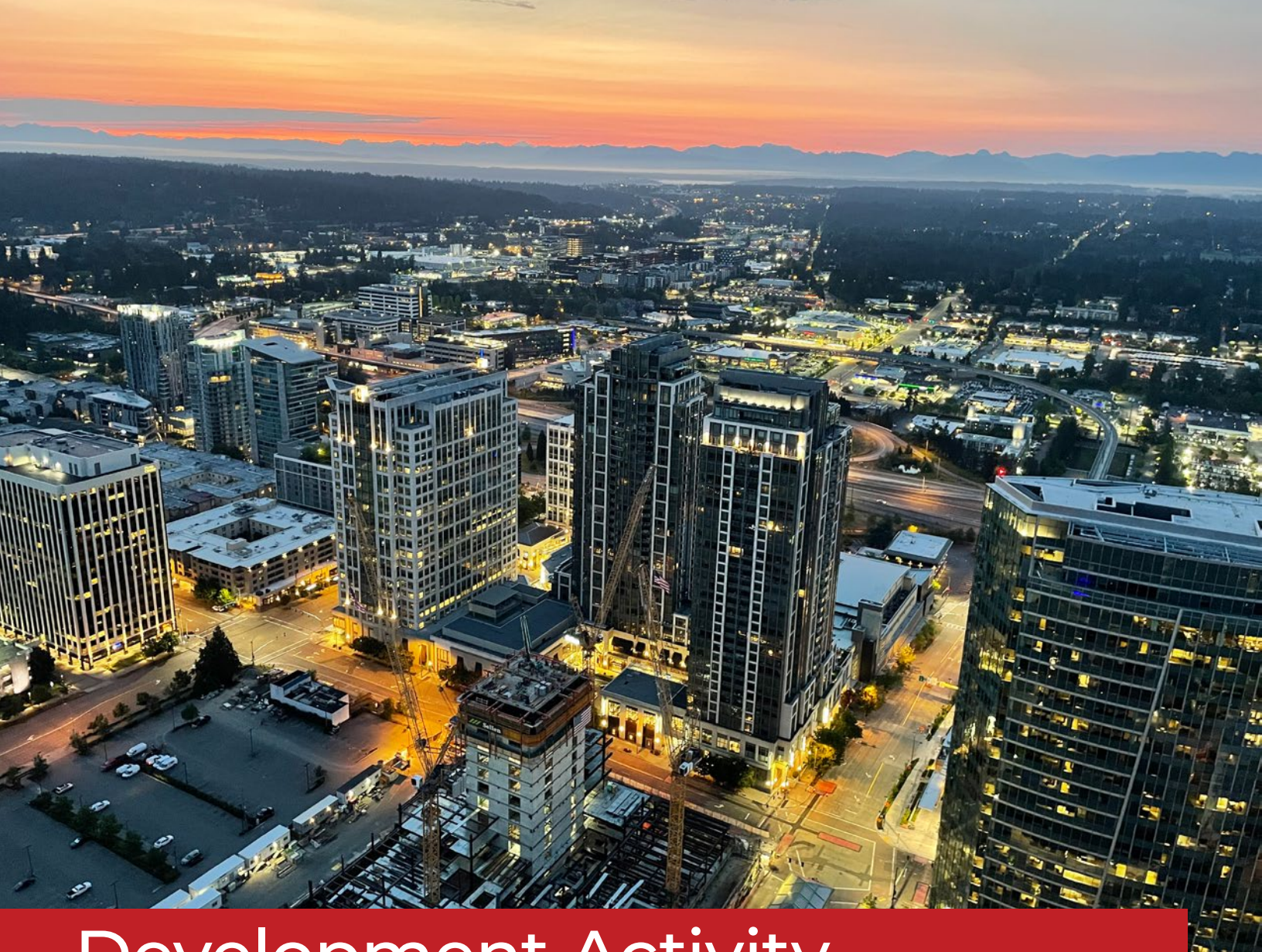
Development Services Fire Prevention Officers

Fire Prevention staff inspect new construction projects to ensure buildings and fire/life safety systems comply with the appropriate codes and standards.

On Duty Investigator

Investigators determine fire cause and point of origin, collect evidence, interview witnesses, write reports and potentially build comprehensive cases for the prosecution of arsonists.

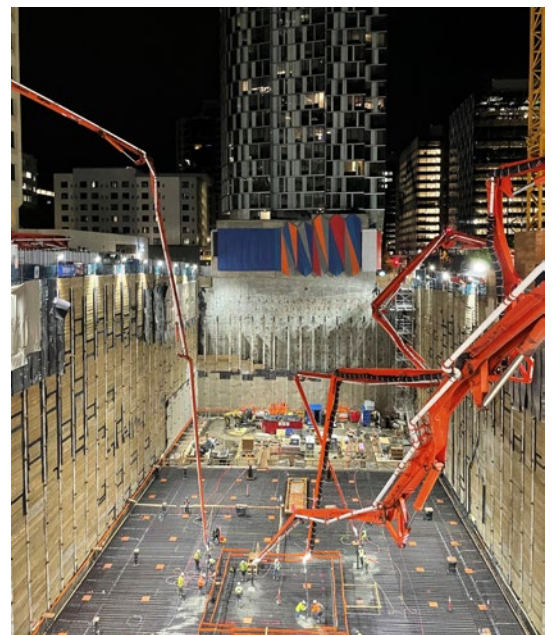




# Development Activity

## Development Services Fire Prevention Team

The year 2023 continued to be a very busy year for our Development Services (DS) Plan Review and New Construction Inspection Teams, with a total of 7,993,208 square feet of major projects under construction. 41 projects were brought to Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) with 29 of these being major projects, and a total of 16 high-rise towers under construction concurrently.





## PLAN REVIEW

In 2023, our Fire Prevention Review Team evaluated 2,916 sets of construction documents and fire protection system designs to ensure that the minimum fire codes and standards were consistently applied. Ensuring that projects comply with nationally recognized good practice for providing a reasonable level of life safety and property protection from the hazards of fire, explosion, or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings, and to provide a reasonable level of safety to firefighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.

## NEW CONSTRUCTION INSPECTIONS

In 2023 our Fire Prevention New Construction Inspection Team conducted a thorough examination of all 7,993,208 square feet of new major project construction area multiple times over, as well as that for Tenant Improvement projects for a total of 6,986 total inspections. This team is dedicated to ensuring that buildings and fire/life safety systems comply with the appropriate codes and standards. The upcoming challenges for our team includes keeping pace with the construction demand and complexity, training new staff, and aligning resources with the demands.

### Downtown Major Projects Map



# Major High-Rise Projects



## NE 8th | 10666 NE 8th Street

- Mixed-Use Office
- 25 stories
- 523,000 SF Office
- 12,650 SF Active Use
- 883 Parking Spaces



## Bellevue 600 | 600 108th Avenue NE

### Phase 1

- Mixed-Use Office Tower
- 45 Stories
- 839,500 SF Office
- 11,680 SF Active Uses
- 1,056 Parking Spaces

### Phase 2

- Mixed Use Office
- 31 Stories
- 764,400 SF Office
- 21,230 SF Retail



## Four 106 | 320 106th Avenue NE

### Phase 1 (Design Review):

- 21 Story Office Tower
- 426,000 SF Office
- 12,175 SF Active Use
- 730 Parking Spaces

### Phase 2:

- 5 Story Office Building
- 98,000 SF Office
- 6,700 SF Active Use
- 330 Parking Spaces



## Northup Way Mixed Use | 1955 129th Avenue NE

- Mixed Use Residential
- 9 Stories
- 456 Parking Spaces
- 571,189 SF Residential
- 10,412 SF Retail



## The Artise | 788 106th Avenue NE

- Mixed-Use Office Tower
- 25 Stories
- 509,400 SF Office
- 7,500 SF Active Use
- 890 Parking Spaces



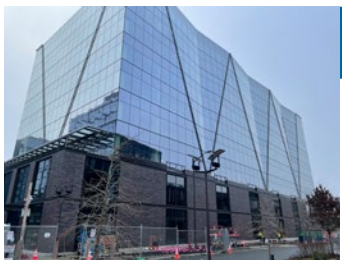
## Broadstone Bellevue Gateway | 11100 Main Street

- Two Multi-Family Residential Buildings
- 22 Story Residential Tower
- 7 Story Residential Building
- 334 Residential Units
- 7,500 SF Active Uses
- 236 Parking Spaces



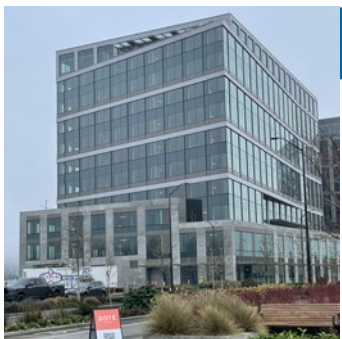
## Avenue Bellevue | 10300 NE 8th Street

- 2 Mixed-Use Residential Towers
- 330 Residential (Condominium) Units
- 251 Hotel Units
- 76,000 SF Ground Level & Upper-Level Active Uses
- 826 Parking Spaces



## Block 13 | 1385 123rd Avenue NE

- Office Tower
- 9 Stories
- 211,122 SF Office
- 276 Parking Spaces



## Block 5 | 1615 123rd Avenue NE

- Mixed-Use Office Tower
- 11 Stories
- 283,066 SF Office
- 7,395 SF Retail
- 469 Parking Spaces





## Block 6 | 1646 123rd Avenue NE

- Office Tower
- 11 Stories
- 324,502 SF Office
- 562 Parking Spaces



## Bellevue Plaza

### Tower 1

**85 106th Avenue NE**

- Mixed-Use Office Tower
- 17 Stories
- 311,255 SF Office
- 41,175 SF Commercial
- 542 Parking Spaces

### Tower 2

**117 106th Avenue NE**

- Mixed-Use Office Tower
- 16 Stories
- 332,347 SF Office
- 34,959 SF Commercial
- 1170 Parking Spaces

### Tower 3

**185 106th Avenue NE**

- Mixed-Use Office Tower
- 17 Stories
- 317,635 SF Office
- 31,189 SF Commercial
- 1170 Parking Spaces



## 555 | 555 108th Avenue NE

2023 also ushered in the first 600-foot tower in the City of Bellevue, another of the major high-rise projects for our DS Team. This structure was the first in Bellevue and the second in Washington State to include an Emergency Occupant Evacuation Elevator and received its Temporary Certificate of Occupancy in June 2023.

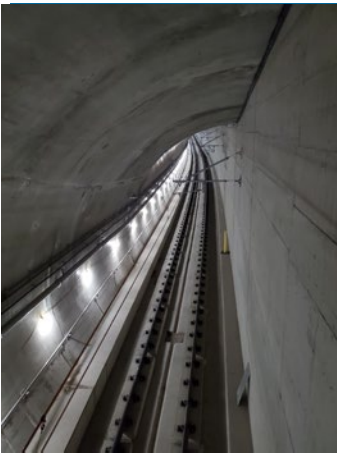
- Mixed-Use Office Tower
- 43 Stories
- 600 Feet in Height
- Emergency Occupant Evacuation Elevator
- 952,404 SF Office
- 14,030 SF Commercial
- 72,070 SF Industrial
- 1016 Parking Spaces



## Sound Transit Light-Rail Stations

In addition, all six Sound Transit Light-Rail Stations and the South Portal Downtown Tunnel were inspected and given their Temporary Certificate of Occupancy in 2023.

- E320 South Bellevue Station  
2654 Bellevue Way SE
- E335 East Main Station  
229 112th Avenue SE
- E335 Downtown  
Bellevue Station  
597 112th Avenue NE
- E335 Wilburton Station  
855 118th Avenue NE
- E335 120th / Spring  
District Station  
1501 124th Avenue NE
- E340 130th Station  
1628 130th Avenue NE



## E330 South Portal Downtown Bellevue Tunnel | 11118 SE 1st Place

- 0.5 miles of tunnel track
- Constructed via the Cut and Cover method



# Maintenance Inspections

The Maintenance Fire & Life Safety Inspection Program exists to ensure every commercial and multi-family residential building is kept fire safe and remains in compliance with the construction requirements in place when built. In short, the program verifies every building accessible to the public is safe for the them to enter and efficient for firefighters responding during fire and medical emergencies.

## 2023 MAINTENANCE INSPECTION METRICS (OVERVIEW):

- Firefighters conducted 1,593 inspections (14,044,751 square feet)
- Fire Prevention Officers (dedicated inspectors) inspected 2,425 occupancies (80,690,498 square feet)
- Firefighters and fire inspectors found 2,506 fire code violations in 2023
  - ▶ Department verified 1,770 of them were repaired within the same year (70%) during re-visits.

## FREQUENTLY FOUND FIRE CODE VIOLATIONS IN 2023 AND WHY THEY MATTER:

- **Fire Extinguishers locations & servicing:** Fire extinguishers are important for two reasons: they allow everyday people to stop fires from growing before firefighters arrive and, in extreme fire conditions, help people safely leave when fires are in the path of exiting. As such, fire inspectors and firefighters ensure they are placed in the proper location and serviced annually.
- **Upkeeping fire protection systems:** There are fewer large fires in modern buildings because they have systems that detect fires early (fire alarms) and keep them contained until the fire engines arrive (sprinkler systems). These systems are only reliable if they are regularly inspected and properly maintained over time though, which is why the department places so much emphasis on these systems.
- **Commercial Kitchen fire protection maintenance:** Commercial kitchens are more prone to fires than other businesses because the substances they use to cook are quite flammable. Luckily, they have specially designed fire suppression systems above the cooktops to stop them from getting out of control.
- **Emergency exit reliability:** The number one priority of the fire code in the event of a fire is that everyone inside can get out safely. Property and buildings can be replaced, but people cannot. This is why emergency exiting code requirements are highly prioritized by the Bellevue Fire Department. There are many components, from exit signs so they are easily located to verifying that doors do not require too much force to open.
- **Unapproved penetrations in fire and smoke walls:** Modern buildings are constructed with fire-rated walls, ceilings, and floors to ensure fires cannot quickly spread from one area to another while people are exiting. Something Bellevue firefighters and fire prevention officers look for during their inspections is that no new unapproved openings have been made to these rated barriers. One common example is cutting holes to run electrical cabling for internet and power. It is important to involve the building division when making holes in these walls and ceilings, to ensure they are done in ways that don't allow fire to quickly spread.





# Fire Investigations

The Bellevue Fire Investigations team is responsible for determining the origin and cause, (where and why fires occur) of substantial, complicated, and intentionally set fires. On those few fires there is suspicion of someone intentionally starting them, the fire investigators co-respond with the Bellevue Police Department's arson detectives. In 2023, three new Fire Prevention Officers joined the fire investigations team, bringing the number of members to five.

In total, 19 fires were investigated. Of note were two unrelated 3-alarm apartment fires that occurred in the Crossroads neighborhood in August. Neither apartment building had fire sprinkler systems due to their age of construction, which contributed to the extensive fire damage

in both incidents. All apartment buildings constructed today require both commercial fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems, which mitigate fire risk.

Bellevue Fire Investigators saw an increase in fires unintentionally caused by improperly used electric space heaters and temporarily placing items on oven cooktops that were unintentional turned on. There are easy but extremely effective lessons to learn here. Always keep space heaters at least 3 feet from combustible materials, ensure they are listed (preferably UL), and have tip-over protection so they shutoff when tilted. Never use your cooktops for anything but active cooking, even if you intend to only place items down momentarily.



# Education



## Dry Grass

As we approach the warmer months of the Puget Sound, the Bellevue Fire Department wants to remind residents how to protect their homes and properties from the risk of wildfire with a few quick tips:

1. Trees, large bushes, and beauty bark should be kept at least 10 ft. from any structure. These items are fire fuels that put your home at a greater risk should a fire occur. Consider planting naturally fire-resistant vegetation.
2. Keeping your lawn low and green will eliminate many risk factors that come with dry weather. Tall, dry grass is easily ignitable and will spread rapidly, creating a dangerous and often difficult-to-control situation.
3. If conditions are safe for outdoor recreational fires, keep your fires small, and have a hose ready should your fire get out of control. Recreational fires must be 25 ft. from combustibles, including fences and houses. Portable outdoor fireplaces made of noncombustible materials and that have a wire mesh lid to prevent embers floating are preferable (those must be at least 15 ft. from combustibles). It is always best practice to ensure the coals are cool before leaving a fire unattended. Visit the King County Fire Marshals and Puget Sound Clean Air's [pscleanair.gov/168/Air-Quality-Burn-Ban-Status](https://pscleanair.gov/168/Air-Quality-Burn-Ban-Status) website to check for burn bans before lighting your recreational fire!

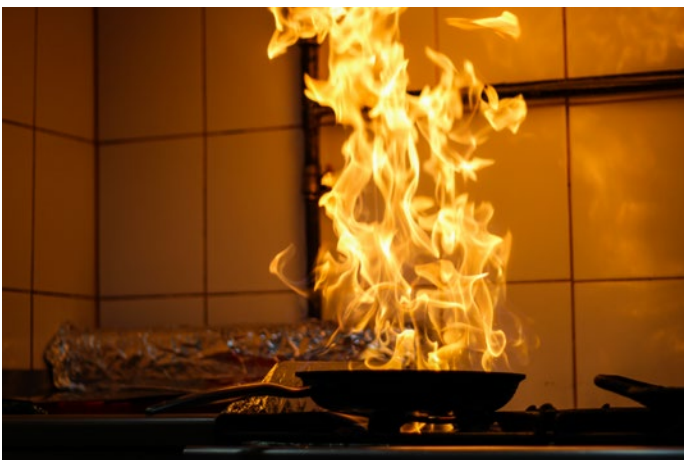
For more fire safety information, visit the USFA's Outdoor Fire Safety page: [usfa.fema.gov/wui/outreach](https://usfa.fema.gov/wui/outreach).

# Cooking Safety (BBQ & Stovetop)

In Bellevue and the entire United States, cooking is one of the leading causes of home fires. Two of the most frequent occurrences are stovetop cooking and grill cooking. Luckily, there are several easy changes you can make to ensure your home is fire safe while cooking!

## STOVETOP COOKING:

1. NEVER leave the kitchen while cooking on the stove, even for a minute.
2. Always turn the handles inward so they cannot be accidentally bumped.
3. Do not use a traditional fire extinguisher on cooking fires. The red multi-purpose extinguishers commonly found are not made to extinguish cooking oil fires. Using one will push the fire out of the pot or pan and onto other items in the kitchen. Keep a tight-fitting lid or a flat baking sheet ready and simply slide it over the pot or pan to smother the fire.
4. Like fire extinguishers, NEVER put water on cooking fires. Water and oil separate, so the water can push the flaming oils outside the pan and start to pop, injuring people nearby.
5. If safe to do so, turn off the burner.
6. Always keep yourself and other family members between the fire and the door to the outside. If you cannot safely put out the fire, immediately get yourself and other family members out of the house. Call 911 and wait outside for the fire department to arrive. Remember, belongings and homes can be replaced!



## BARBEQUE GRILL COOKING:

1. NEVER leave the barbeque unattended while you are cooking.
2. Regularly clean the grease and food remains from inside your grill and remember to empty the drip tray also.
3. Put coals and ashes in a metal trash can after they have cooled and put a lid on it.
4. Always use cooking devices like barbeques and grills in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. This includes keeping them far enough away from combustible materials like your house and wooden deck.
5. Ensure children and pets are not allowed within 3-feet of the grill.
6. If you are having a grill permanently installed, ensure your contractor applies for the appropriate permits and installs fire-resistant construction around the grill in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and city's codes.
7. Never use gas-fueled appliances indoors, as this can lead to CO poisoning.
8. Always open the lid before lighting the grill, and do not apply flammable liquids to your grill.
9. If possible, have a garden hose nearby and ready for use.
10. Regularly check your propane tank for damage and leaks.
11. If you cannot safely put out the fire, immediately get yourself and other family members out of the house. Call 911 and wait outside for the fire department to arrive.



# Special Events

Throughout 2023 the Fire Prevention Division, along with the Special Events Committee, was involved with over 30 events throughout Bellevue, Medina, and Newcastle. There was a diverse mix of events, including firework displays, bonfires, markets, fairs, and several cultural events. The Fire Prevention Division's responsibility in these events lies in evaluating event applications for compliance with Bellevue Fire Code requirements, including crowd management and pre-planning, fire engine access, and use of open flames. The Building Department is also consulted to ensure temporary structures, like stages, are safe for performers and attendees. The Fire Prevention Officers regularly integrate with Fire Department Operations and the Office of Emergency Management, as well as the Police, Parks, and Transportation to ensure a safe, fun event. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we connect with vendors and event coordinators early and often. This improves the process and better educates members of the public on the importance of event preparedness. Special events naturally encourage diverse community engagement, and perfectly reflect City Council's Vision: "Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength. We embrace the future while respecting our past."

## Bellevue Family 4th

The Bellevue Family 4th event included live music, food vendors, family activities, and a fireworks display accompanied by live music from the Bellevue Youth Symphony Orchestra. The event attracted over 70,000 attendees and included over 10 fire prevention personnel. The Fire Prevention team conducted a comprehensive pre-inspection of Bellevue Downtown Park, monitored the fireworks display, and engaged with the community throughout the event.



## Paws & Pride

In 2023, The City of Bellevue hosted its first Paws & Pride event, which Fire Prevention's Special Events team assisted in planning attendee safety through pre-inspection.







## Downtown Ice Rink

The downtown ice rink is open for almost two months at the Bellevue Downtown Park. There were themed nights and even some evenings that provided free skating nights. Due to the all-weather shelter cover, which Bellevue Fire Prevention helped inspect for structural stability and safety, the ice rink stayed open during all weather conditions.



## NW Ukrainian International Festival

The NW Ukrainian International Festival celebrated the Northwest's Ukrainian community and culture. There were food vendors, activities, live music and much more.

## Arts Market

More than 120 artists showcased their work to celebrate arts and culture in downtown Bellevue.





City of Bellevue Fire Department  
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