

Burlington Fire Department gets health, safety upgrades





BURLINGTON, OREGON– The Burlington fire station is undergoing a series of upgrades designed to improve the health and safety of the department's firefighters.

In an attempt to reduce the amount of diesel exhaust trapped in the station, a source-capture exhaust system is being installed to be used in the station's five most-used bays, Burlington Fire Chief Levon Yengoyan said.

"We all know that cancer rates in firefighters are going up and up and up and up," Yengoyan said. "We want to do everything we can to protect them."

The capture exhaust system connects directly to a vehicle's exhaust pipe and vents the exhaust outside through the roof, rather than allowing it into the bay, which is where firefighters' gear is kept and where they exercise.

"As we learn more and more we learn how bad diesel exhaust is for everyone," Yengoyan said.

Long-term exposure to diesel exhaust degrades firefighters' gear, he said.

Each hose is connected to a vehicle by magnet and automatically disconnects when the vehicle leaves the station.

"It's a great, great thing to have here," Yengoyan said of the capture exhaust system.

Most new fire stations have similar systems, but the Burlington station was built more than 20 years ago, he said.

The upgrades were paid for by a \$95,000 federal grant and a contribution of about \$20,000 from the city, Yengoyan said.

The addition is part of several health and safety upgrades made at the station over the past few years, he said.

The station's carpet will also be ripped out in favor of the underlying concrete, which can be mopped clean and won't hold particles tracked in by firefighters.

The upgrades are the last that will happen at the station under Yengoyan's tenure, as he leaves the department at the end of the month.

"It's something that's very important to me," Yengoyan said. "I'm very excited to see it getting implemented prior to my departure."

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