

# The Fire Plug



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## Protect Your Home and Community from Wildfire

Northern California has experienced an unprecedented amount of wildfires this year. With the risk that the Kensington community faces from the wildland interface with East Bay Regional Park's Wildcat Canyon, it is imperative that we embrace vegetation management to reduce the fire hazard within our community.

Wildfires often begin unnoticed and can spread quickly, igniting brush, trees, and homes. Below are a few simple things you can do to prevent wildfires and promote overall fire safety in our community.

- *Design and landscape your home with wildfire safety in mind. Select materials and plants that can help contain fire rather than fuel it. Plant fire resistant shrubs and trees.*
- *Use fire resistant or non-combustible materials on roofs and exteriors of all buildings.*
- *Clear all flammable vegetation such as dry grass and weeds.*
- *Prune tree branches and shrubs within 10 feet of a chimney outlet or stovepipe.*



A Kensington Firefighter in action

- *Place fireplace and grill ashes in a metal container with a tight lid.*
- *Store gasoline, oily rags and other flammable materials in approved containers only and away from ignition sources.*
- *Teach children about fire safety. Keep matches and lighters out of their reach.*
- *Regularly clean your roof and gutters of leaves, debris and pine needles.*
- *Install a spark arrestor screen on your fireplace chimney.*

It is the responsibility of each property owner to insure their property is fire safe and to make certain there is a reduced risk in our community.

For a copy of KFPD's Fire Hazard Reduction Guidelines, go to [www.kensingtonfire.org/links.shtml](http://www.kensingtonfire.org/links.shtml). For additional ideas on fire landscapes see EBMUD's website at [www.ebmud.com/conserving\\_&\\_recycling/conservation\\_publications](http://www.ebmud.com/conserving_&_recycling/conservation_publications)

## October 4th Open House at the Fire Station

The Kensington Fire Protection District will be hosting a Fire Prevention Month Open House on **Saturday, October 4, 2008**. The public is encouraged to stop by for a tour of the station and to meet the firefighters that so proudly serve you.

Refreshments will be served and Chief Lance Maples will be grilling hot dogs for all to enjoy. Children can explore the fire engines and go home with a souvenir. Please drop by between the hours of **12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.**



Director Ramsey with Pluggie the Robotic Fire Hydrant and Jr. Firefighters

## KFPD BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- *Janice Kosel, President*
- *Helmut Blaschczyk, Vice President*
- *Nina Ramsey, Secretary*
- *Don Dommer, Director*
- *Leslie Michael, Director*

## KFPD STAFF:

- *Lance Maples, Chief*
- *Brenda Navellier, Administrator*



## CPR/First Aid Training Classes

Do you want to get certified in CPR or First Aid? Do you need to renew your certification?

In the U.S. there are at least 300,000 victims of sudden cardiac arrest every year. A staggering amount of these Americans will die because not enough people are trained in CPR. 75-80% of cardiac arrests occur at home, making it that much more important for families of those at risk to be able to begin CPR before medical response can reach you.

If you would like to take a CPR and/or First Aid class, your Fire District is here to help. Classes are taught in very small groups and priority registration is given to Kensington and El Cerrito residents.



Processing fee is \$23 for CPR and \$46 for CPR/First Aid. For more information or to sign up call 510/215-4450 or email [fire@ci-el-cerrito.org](mailto:fire@ci-el-cerrito.org).

CPR begins at 9:00 a.m. There is a break from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. for lunch on your own. First Aid resumes from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m.

### 2008 CPR/First Aid Schedule

September 20	Kensington
October 18	El Cerrito
November 22	Kensington
December 13	El Cerrito

Kensington classes are held at the Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Avenue. El Cerrito classes are held at Fire Station 72, 1520 Arlington Blvd.

## Water System Improvements—Enhanced Firefighting Protection

KFPD has completed the fifth phase of water system improvements that were outlined in its 1999 adopted Water System Improvements Master Plan.

The fifth phase consists of installing 1,000 feet of 8-inch pipe through the Unitarian Universalist Church property on Lawson Road and connecting the existing water mains on Craft Avenue in El Cerrito and Lawson Avenue in Ken-

*Water flow has improved greatly at the wildland interface!*

sington. In addition, four new hydrants were installed throughout the property to benefit the surrounding neighborhood. The UUCB congregation graciously voted to allow an EBMUD easement through their property.

This water system improvement will help firefighting water flow in the Lawson, Cowper and Kensington Road area. KFPD is able to pay for the improvements through long-term

financial planning—no bond indebtedness was incurred.

Since 2000, four other phases consisting of major water main replacements have been completed along the wildland interface including Beloit Ave., Kenyon Ave., Lake Dr., Los Altos Dr. and Purdue Ave., plus an additional 28 hydrants have been installed throughout the Kensington community.

These increased fire flows from the pipeline improvements will now supply ample water to service three engines at the EBRPD wildland interface.

## Pharmaceutical Disposal Program Successful

On July 19, KFPD held its first pharmaceutical drop-off event through its EMT/Paramedic Program. The drop-off was held at the Kensington fire station and was a great success!

A steady flow of residents dropped off pharmaceuticals during the scheduled Saturday afternoon. The program filled two 12-gallon medical waste containers. The containers were picked-up by a specially licensed contractor that incinerates them. Drop offs consisted of a wide array of prescriptions, expired over-the-counter medications and sharps.

Many of the residents that participated in the program thanked the District for the valuable service to the community.

It is important to dispose of pharmaceuticals properly. Do not flush them in the water system or throw them in the trash where they end up in our drinking water or ground soil. Also, leaving unused medications in your home can create a risk for all family members, particularly youths.

KFPD anticipates another drop-off in the beginning of 2009. Thank you to all who participated!



*Our July event removed 24 gallons of medical waste from the community!*



## CERT Program Prepares Citizens for Emergencies

Being prepared and trained for a disaster means more than it did just a few years ago. All we have to do is look at the tragic natural disasters that have occurred recently around the world. Being trained means that you, your family and community members will be prepared for a disaster in your community. That means less panic and better decision making as well as self-reliant individuals working together to ensure everyone's safety.

**THE NEED:** CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) is based on simple principle. In *major* emergencies, professional emergency services are immediately overloaded. The Kensington Fire Protection District has three firefighters and one Battalion Chief (assigned to Kensington and El Cerrito) on duty on any given day. This is 3-1/3 first responders for a community of approx. 5,000, which is adequate for normal emergencies. If a mass emer-

gency traps or injures just 2% of our residents, there are instantly 100 victims, many with possible major injuries. Telephone lines and connections may fail from overload. Roads, electricity, and other services may fail, hampering emergency services and interfering with supplies. The benefit of having trained volunteers to assist local first responders is quite clear.

In these environments, CERT volunteers are far more effective than untrained civilians. With less than 40 hours of basic training, you can become qualified to assist during an emergency at many different levels. Participants will be trained to assist with rescues, triage and first aid procedures in the first 24 hours of an event when those services are most likely to be needed. While volunteers are not able to work as skillfully as professionals, they can do a lot to help their neighbors.

*Are  
you  
ready?*



**THE PROGRAM:** The CERT program educates enrollees about hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

Using the training learned in the classroom and in drills, CERT members can assist others at home, in their neighborhood or workplace following a catastrophic event when professionals are not immediately available to help.

To register for CERT, visit our website at [www.elcerritokeningtoncert.org](http://www.elcerritokeningtoncert.org) or call 510/215-4450.

## Watch for Red Flag Warning Days

During extreme fire weather, firefighters will raise a red triangle-shaped fire weather flag at Station 65 (the Kensington fire station).

Flying these flags is intended to alert citizens that extreme fire conditions are present. High



temperatures, low humidity and strong winds combine to create conditions that are conducive for wildland fire ignition and propagation. When weather conditions like these reach critical levels, we all need to take extra precautions.

This year, in a proactive effort, a fourth person will be added to staffing at the Kensington station during Red Flag Days.

Additional staffing will allow the engine to deploy their firefighting resources in a more time effective manner and will also enable them to extinguish wildland fires when they are much smaller.

## Cooking Fire Safety

Many families gather in the kitchen to spend time together, but it can be one of the most hazardous rooms in the house if you don't practice safe cooking behavior. Cooking equipment, most often a range or stovetop, is the leading cause of reported home fires and home fire injuries in the United States. Cooking equipment is also the leading cause of unreported fires and associated injuries.

It is a recipe for serious injury or even death to wear loose clothing, walking

away from a cooking pot on the stove, or leaving flammable materials, such as potholders or paper towels around the stove. Practicing safe cooking behaviors will keep you and your family safe.

- **Follow manufacturer's instructions and code requirements when installing and operating cooking equipment.**
- **Keep anything that can catch fire—potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, towels or curtains away from your stove.**

- **Keep your stove clean.**
- **Keep pets off cooking surfaces and counter tops.**
- **Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "Kid Free Zone" of 3 feet around the stove.**
- **Never hold a child while cooking.**
- **Replace old or worn-out oven mitts.**

Follow these basic tips to make your kitchen safer!

## KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Kensington Public Safety Building  
217 Arlington Avenue  
Kensington, CA 94708

Phone: 510/527-8395  
Fax: 510/527-8396  
E-mail: [kensingtonfirepd@aol.com](mailto:kensingtonfirepd@aol.com)

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## Create A Home Disaster Preparedness Kit

After a disaster, emergency workers will be on the scene, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours or it may take days. Is your family prepared to cope with an emergency until help arrives?

In keeping with our CERT program (see page 3), the KFPD recommends each home create a Disaster Preparedness Kit. Once a disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. If you've gathered supplies in advance, your family can endure evacuation or home confinement.

**Supplies:** There are six basics you should assemble for an emergency: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies. Keep the items that you would most likely need in an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container. Remember,

your home may not be habitable.

Consider special items: prescription medications, baby needs, pet needs and important family documents.



*A sample Preparedness Kit for a family of four.*

**Getting Started:** Visit our website at: [www.kensingtonfire.org/cert\\_training.shtml](http://www.kensingtonfire.org/cert_training.shtml) and download a copy of the Red Cross Family Disaster Supplies Kit pamphlet.

Ready-made disaster kits can also be purchased, often from warehouse stores or on the internet, but would need to be supplemented with personal items.

- *Make sure your kit is stored in a convenient place known to all family*

*members. Keep a smaller version in the trunk of your car.*

- *Keep items in an air tight plastic bags.*
- *Rotate your stored water and food supply every six months..*
- *Rethink your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.*

**Be Prepared!**