



RESOLUTION 2022-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT DECLARING THAT WEEDS, RUBBISH, LITTER OR OTHER FLAMMABLE MATERIAL ON DESIGNATED PRIVATE PROPERTIES CONSTITUTES A PUBLIC NUISANCE AND PROVIDING FOR NOTICE THAT THE FIRE CHIEF OR DESIGNEE SHALL ABATE SUCH PUBLIC NUISANCE CONDITIONS IF NOT ABATED BY THE PROPERTY OWNER.

WHEREAS, Health and Safety Code Sections 14875 et seq provides a method by which a local legislative body may abate on private property public nuisance conditions relating to weeds, rubbish, litter or other flammable material which creates a fire hazard, a menace to the public health or which is otherwise noxious or dangerous; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Marshal for the Kensington Fire Protection District has identified in Exhibit A to this resolution those private properties, by street name, lot and block number, on which the presence of weeds, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 14875, constitute a public nuisance; and

WHEREAS, Health and Safety Code Sections 14890 through 14899 provide that notice shall be provided to each person to whom the properties identified in Exhibit A is assessed informing those persons that unless the property owner abates those nuisance conditions, that the Fire District shall abate the public nuisance. The notice shall further state that if the Fire District must abate the public nuisance, then the cost of abatement shall be assessed against the property as a special assessment. The notice shall also specify a date for a hearing at which property owners may present objections to the designation of their properties as public nuisances or to the proposed removal of the weeds by the Fire District; and

WHEREAS, Health and Safety Code Section 14900 provides that after the hearing, the local legislative body may, by motion or resolution, order the Fire Chief or designee to abate the public nuisance. After further proceedings, these abatement costs may be assessed against the property as a special assessment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Kensington Fire Protection District that the properties listed in Exhibit A to this resolution are declared a public nuisance and such nuisance conditions shall be ordered abated because the presence of weeds, rubbish, litter or other flammable material on those properties create a fire hazard, a menace to the public health or are otherwise noxious or dangerous.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the notice shall state that a public hearing shall be held on September 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at a location to be publicly noticed 72 hours prior to the meeting in accordance with the Brown Act. At this hearing, the Board shall receive a written staff report on abatement actions and any objections shall be heard from the property owners identified in Exhibit A liable to be assessed for the abatement.

The foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the Kensington Fire Protection District on the 8th day of June 2022 by the following vote of the Board.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Larry Nagel, President

Janice Kosel, Secretary

EXHIBIT A

As of 5/31/22

Kensington Fire Protection District
List of Real Property Constituting Public Nuisances

| APN | Street Address |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 572-232-023 | 23 Anson Way |
| 572-232-017 | 47 Anson Way |
| 570-050-027 | 243 Arlington Avenue |
| 570-253-001 | Vacant lot Beloit Avenue |
| 570-253-002 | Vacant lot Beloit Avenue |
| 570-253-003 | Vacant lot Beloit Avenue |
| 570-253-004 | Vacant lot Beloit Avenue |
| 570-253-005 | Vacant lot Beloit Avenue |
| 570-253-006 | Vacant lot Beloit Avenue |
| 570-203-012 | 285 Colgate Avenue |
| 571-140-002 | 760 Coventry Road |
| 571-160-001 | 520 Coventry Road |
| 572-080-017 | 10 Garden Drive |
| 572-231-010 | 18 Highgate Road |
| 572-170-006 | 38 Highgate Road |
| 572-170-011 | 48 Highgate Road |
| 570-251-020 | Vacant lot Los Altos Drive |
| 570-251-021 | Vacant lot Los Altos Drive |
| 570-251-019 | 298 Los Altos Drive |
| 571-180-011 | 87 Richardson Road |



COURTESY REMINDER

REMOVE WILDFIRE HAZARDS

March 15, 2022

Dear Property Owner,

Please take a moment to read this important information as it reflects the commitment and responsibility of the City of El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department in our continuing efforts to keep our community safe from fire. **This responsibility could have a fiscal impact on you, as a property owner in the communities of El Cerrito/Kensington.**

El Cerrito Municipal Code, Chapter 8.34-Nuisance Abatement, provides information regarding definition(s), responsibility, condition (s), notice(s), hearing(s), abatement(s), cost(s) used for the purpose of abating a public nuisance.

All properties are required to be **COMPLETELY CLEARED** by April 15th of each year and **are required to meet the adopted vegetation standards at all times.** Fire potential within our community and throughout communities within California are no longer seasonal occurrences. The importance of year-round vegetation management on all properties within El Cerrito and Kensington is critical. Our community is unique and fire safety is an important issue to us all. Purposeful agency action and community involvement is central. Strength that exists in numbers facilitates accomplishing small measures of a big picture solution. This is supported and encouraged throughout all levels of community leadership and initiates with a grass roots approach and a “can-do” attitude. A communal effort, coupled with the willingness to create a safer environment is at the center of these preventative measures.

This letter serves as our annual reminder to you as the property owner to have your property cleared of all flammable vegetation and accumulations of combustible materials that constitute a fire hazard **by April 15, 2022.**

If your property contains a rental unit(s) and the tenant(s) are responsible for maintenance and upkeep, it is your obligation to advise them of the City’s/District’s requirements. Be aware that failure of the tenant(s) to comply does not remove the responsibility for compliance by the property owner.

Inspections by the Fire Department will begin the third week of April 2022. Properties not in compliance will be subject to violations and penalties in the manner provided within local ordinance relating to fire hazard abatement or such other manner as authorized by state or local law.

The following are declared to be public nuisances (8.34.040) within the limits of the city and it shall be the responsibility of the owner, occupant, agent or person having charge of the property, upon which such nuisance exist, to abate such nuisances at his or her own expense whenever they may exist:

Overgrown vegetation: Causing detriment to neighbor properties or causing a fire hazard.

Dead, decayed, diseased or hazardous trees, weeds, and other vegetation: Constituting a danger to public safety and welfare or detrimental to nearby property.



CUTTING CRITERIA:

- a. Dried weeds, grasses, brush shall be cut and maintained to a height of **no more than six (6") inches** for a minimum of thirty (30') feet around structure. Note: 100' feet minimum if in identified wildland urban interface (WUI) area OR Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).
- b. Exception: Single specimens, ornamental shrubbery or similar plants used for ground covers, provided they do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from the native growth to a structure.
- c. All parcels **under 3 acres** in size and **all vacant parcels** shall be **completely cut**, including areas around fences.
- d. Dead or dying trees shall be cut down and removed or chipped.
- e. **Trim tree branches** a minimum of ten (10') feet away from roofs or chimneys and **up six (6') feet from the ground.**
- f. **Remove all combustible rubbish, trash, and debris.**

PROPERTY OWNER:

If you wish to have work performed by private contractors, the Fire Department has vendors they have used to perform this type of work (email fpo@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us). The El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department does not endorse or imply any recommendation for the use of a specific contractor.

For further information on El Cerrito Code sections visit the City's website at:

<https://www.el-cerrito.org/133/Fire-Department> or https://library.municode.com/ca/el_cerrito

For Kensington residents reference the California Public Resources Code 4291 at:

[kensingtonfire.org/vegetation-management](https://www.kensingtonfire.org/vegetation-management) or <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>

For information on how to create defensible visit www.readyforwildfire.org.

In the interest of a fire safe community, we thank you for your prompt attention to this notice.

Respectfully,

Chase D. Beckman
Fire Marshal



EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Prevention Office

10900 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530

(510) 215-4457 FAX (510) 232-4917 fpo@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us



April 25, 2022

Parcel Number: «APN»

Property Address: «Site_Address», «Site_City», «Site_State», «Site_Zip»

Property Owner: «OwnerTenant», «Legal_Property_Owner»

Property Owner's Address: «Mailing_Address», «Mailing_City», «Mailing_State», «Mailing_Zip»

Dear Kensington Property Owner:

With the continued drought conditions, the community is facing its peak fire danger earlier than normal. To reduce the fire danger on private property and provide greater community safety, the Fire Department has been inspecting properties and checking for fire hazards. Recently your property listed above was found that it **does not comply** with the Vegetation Management Guidelines set forth in the Kensington Fire Protection District Vegetation Management Standards. You are being notified now so that you may, if you have not already done so, take steps to remove those fire hazard conditions found on your property.

Enclosed is a copy of the Fire Hazard Reduction Inspection form specifying those areas that are not in compliance as well as the Fire Hazard Reduction Guidelines and Fire Hazard Reductions Checklist that can assist you in bringing your property into compliance. More information on the Vegetation Management Standards and Guidelines may be found on the Fire District's website at: www.kensingtonfire.org under Vegetation Management Standards. Additional information is also available at www.readyforwildfire.org or www.cafiresafecouncil.org as well as many others.

If you have recently completed the work to meet these standards, no further action is required. If not, your property is required to be brought into compliance no later than May 25, 2022. There is no need to contact Fire Department upon completion as we will be re-inspecting all properties. When the Fire Department has cleared your property, you will receive a follow up letter to inform you that your property is currently in compliance.

On June 8, 2022 at 7:00PM the Kensington Fire Protection Board of Directors will hold a public hearing to declare those properties still not in compliance as a public nuisance. Your property is at risk of being declared a public nuisance and subject to further abatement actions. In accordance with the Government Code, you may appear before the Board at this public hearing to dispute this declaration.

If you have not done so already, please take immediate action to remove those fire hazard conditions and we thank you for your cooperation helping us make Kensington a more fire safe community.

Sincerely,

Chase Beckman

Chase Beckman
Fire Marshal



**EL CERRITO FIRE DEPARTMENT
KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**



**10900 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, Ca. 94530 (510)215-4450
Fire Hazard Reduction Inspection**

| | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------|-------|----------|
| Owner/Tenant | Site Address | City | State | Zip Code |
|--------------|--------------|------|-------|----------|

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|------|-------|----------|
| Legal Propety Owner | Mailing Address | City | State | Zip Code |
|---------------------|-----------------|------|-------|----------|

APN # _____

**YOUR PROPERTY IS NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FIRE CODE.
YOU MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:**

ZONE 1

Zero to 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks,etc. in all portions within El Cerrito and Kensington

- ____ 1. Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds.
- ____ 2. Remove dead or dying leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- ____ 3. Trees shall be maintained so that no portion is closer than 10 feet from any chimney opening.
- ____ 4. Trees, shrubs, bushes or other vegetation adjacent to or overhanging any structure shall be maintained free of dead limbs and other combustible matter.
- ____ 5. On mature trees, limbs should be removed up to 10' above the ground. Smaller trees should be limbed to 1/3 of their height up to 6' above the ground, but in no case less than 18" from the ground.
- ____ 6. Relocate wood piles to Zone 2 if applicable.
- ____ 7. Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- ____ 8. Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- ____ 9. Create a minimum 6-foot separation between trees, shrubs or vegetation and combustible materials.
- ____ 10. Vacant lots in Zone 1 shall be maintained to be 10 feet wide along the property line.

ZONE 2

Thirty to 100 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. for all parcels within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Zone 1 requirements shall be followed in addition to Zone 2 requirements.

- ____ 1. Cut or mow weeds and grass to a maximum height of 6 inches.
- ____ 2. All fire hazardous vegetation except for weeds and grass shall be cleared and maintained to a height no greater than 18 inches above the ground.
- ____ 3. Vacant lots in Zone 2 shall be maintained to be 30 feet wide along the property line.

COMMENTS:

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------|------|
| Inspected by | Inspection # | Date | Time |
|--------------|--------------|------|------|



KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

c/o El Cerrito Fire Department
10900 San Pablo Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 215-4450
FAX (510) 232-4917

June 13, 2022

Parcel Number: **5XX-XXX-XXX**
Property Address:
Property Owner:
Property Owner's Address:

NOTICE TO DESTROY WEEDS AND REMOVE RUBBISH, REFUSE AND OTHER FLAMMABLE MATERIAL

On **June 8, 2022**, the Kensington Fire Protection District Board of Directors declared that your property in the Kensington community, designated above by address and parcel number, constitutes a public nuisance because of the presence of weeds, rubbish, litter or other flammable material which creates a fire hazard, a menace to the public health, or is otherwise noxious or dangerous.

A previous notice was sent to you informing you of the June 8, 2022 hearing and further informing you of your obligation to remove the weeds, rubbish, refuse and other flammable material from your property. **If you do not immediately abate these nuisance conditions, the District will do so and the costs for removal of the weeds, rubbish, refuse and other flammable material will be assessed against your property as a lien and special assessment.** These removal costs shall then be collected in the time and manner of ordinary municipal taxes.

You will not receive any further notices from the District prior to this removal. The District shall perform this removal either through its own staff or through private contract sometime between **July 11, 2022 and August 1, 2022**. It is impossible to predict what it will cost the District to remove these nuisance conditions from your property. The costs depend on the severity of those conditions. In past years these abatement costs have sometimes exceeded \$8,000 per parcel for those parcels with severe nuisance conditions.

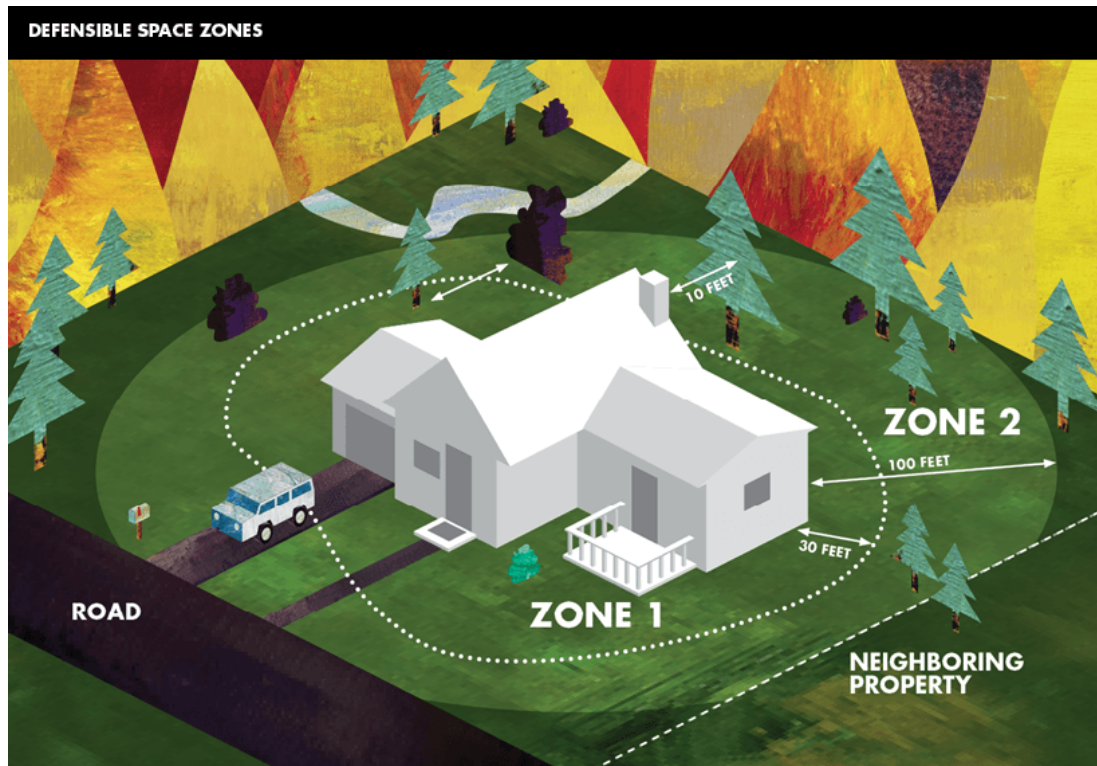
The Kensington Fire Protection District Board of Directors will hold a public hearing on **September 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.** At this hearing, the Board will receive the staff report and cost of abatement for your property. Objections to the abatement costs can be heard at this public hearing. Contact the Fire Department for the location of the meeting or go to the Kensington Fire Protection District website at <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/meetings> for meeting information.

If you have any questions, contact the Fire Department at 10900 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. The phone number is (510) 215-4457.

Chase Beckman

Chase Beckman
Fire Marshal

Kensington Fire Protection District Fire Hazard Reduction Guidelines



Zone 1

Zone 1 extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in all portions within the community of Kensington including the designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones. Vacant lots in Zone 1 shall be maintained to be 10 feet wide along the property line.

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Trees shall be maintained so that no portion is closer than 10 feet from any chimney opening.
- Trees, shrubs, bushes or other vegetation adjacent to or overhanging any structure shall be maintained free of dead limbs and other combustible matter such as vines and loose papery bark.
- On mature trees, limbs should be removed up to 10' above the ground. Smaller trees should be limbed to 1/3rd of their height up to 6' above the ground, but in no case less than 18 inches from the ground.
- Relocate wood piles to Zone 2 if applicable.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Create a minimum 6-foot separation between trees, shrubs or vegetation and combustible materials.

Zone 2

Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in only those areas within the community of Kensington designated as the Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones. Vacant lots in Zone 2 shall be maintained to be 30 feet wide along the property line. NOTES: (1) All Zone 1 requirements shall be followed in addition to the following Zone 2 requirements: (2) The vast majority of the entire community of Kensington is in the VHFHSZ.

- Cut or mow weeds and grass shall be cleared to a maximum height of 6 inches.
- All fire hazardous vegetation except for weeds and grass shall be cleared and maintained to a height no greater than 18 inches above the ground.



Fire Hazard Reduction Checklist



Zone 1 Requirements

Definition: Zone 1 extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in all portions within the community of Kensington including the designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds within 30 feet of buildings, structures, decks, etc.
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters
- Trees shall be maintained so that no portion is closer than 10 feet from any chimney opening
- Trees, shrubs, bushes or other vegetation adjacent to or overhanging any structure shall be maintained free of dead limbs and other combustible matter such as vines and loose papery bark
- On mature trees, limbs should be removed up to 10' above the ground. Smaller trees should be limbed to 1/3rd of their height up to 6' above the ground, but in no case less than 18" from the ground
- Relocate wood piles to Zone 2 if applicable
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks
- Create a minimum 6-foot separation between trees, shrubs or vegetation and combustible materials
- Vacant lots in Zone 1 shall be maintained to be 10 feet wide along the property line

Zone 2 Requirements

Definition: Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in those areas within the community of Kensington designated as the Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones. NOTE: All Zone 1 requirements shall be followed in addition to the following Zone 2 requirements

- Cut or mow weeds and grass shall be cleared to a maximum height of 6 inches
- All fire hazardous vegetation except for weeds and grass shall be cleared and maintained to a height no greater than 18 inches above the ground
- Vacant lots in Zone 2 shall be maintained to be 30 feet wide along the property line

To find out if your property is located within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, go to : <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/> On the upper left hand side, click on the bottom icon for Address Search.

Kensington Fire Protection District Fire Hazard Reduction Program

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Vegetation Management Standards

California communities have experienced devastating fire loss because of the severity of fires which occur in the wildland interface areas. These areas exist in the community of Kensington. In these areas the risk of conflagration is increased further by homeowners who create or do not maintain landscaping on their properties. Homes are threatened by fire every year in California largely because of heavy vegetation fuel load very near structures.

Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) have been identified within the Kensington community by the Kensington Fire Protection District and CAL Fire. As specified by State Law AB 337, property owners within the VHFHSZ must take special precautions with their property, including vegetation management, to reduce the risk of fire. All Kensington property owners must comply with the District's Fire Hazard Reduction standards.

The buildup of unmanaged vegetation, whether native or non-native, steep hillsides with canyons, draws, and periods of extremely hot, dry weather all combine to create in Kensington the potential for catastrophic fire behavior. Catastrophic fires can destroy large numbers of homes, threaten public safety and severely damage the natural areas which contribute to our high quality of living.

A key goal of Kensington's community fire protection planning is to reduce the level of fire hazards throughout the community and particularly in the VHFHSZ. While it is not possible to eliminate all threats of catastrophic wildfire, fire hazards can be reduced to acceptable levels and still allow a "green" community.

Vegetation management planning in the VHFHS Zone focuses on areas where fire poses the greatest risk to life and property. Fires will continue to be a part of California urban living. By implementing vegetation management standards, Kensington residents can significantly reduce the potential a small fire will grow into a catastrophic event. An important component of reducing the community's fire risk requires vegetation management to be practiced by all property owners.

No person shall be prosecuted criminally under the provisions of Section 4 of the Kensington Fire Protection District Ordinance 95-1 until that person has received written notice of how that property violates these standards and until that person has had the reasonable opportunity to meet with District staff concerning the violation. Civil Enforcement of these guidelines as provided for in Section 5 of Ordinance 95-1, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 14912 et. seq. Civil procedures for fire hazard abatement include providing the property owner with (1) written notice on how the property violates these guidelines, (2) reasonable opportunity to comply with the guidelines and (3) opportunity to be heard before the Board of Directors of the Kensington Fire Protection District.

II. FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION GUIDELINES

Many factors combine to create a fire hazard on any specific property. It is difficult to single out a specific vegetation species or configuration to declare it either fire hazardous or completely fire safe in all situations. The Fire Department has developed guidelines conforming to State Law and National Fire Protection Standards which address most situations found on private property within Kensington.

A. Hazard Zones

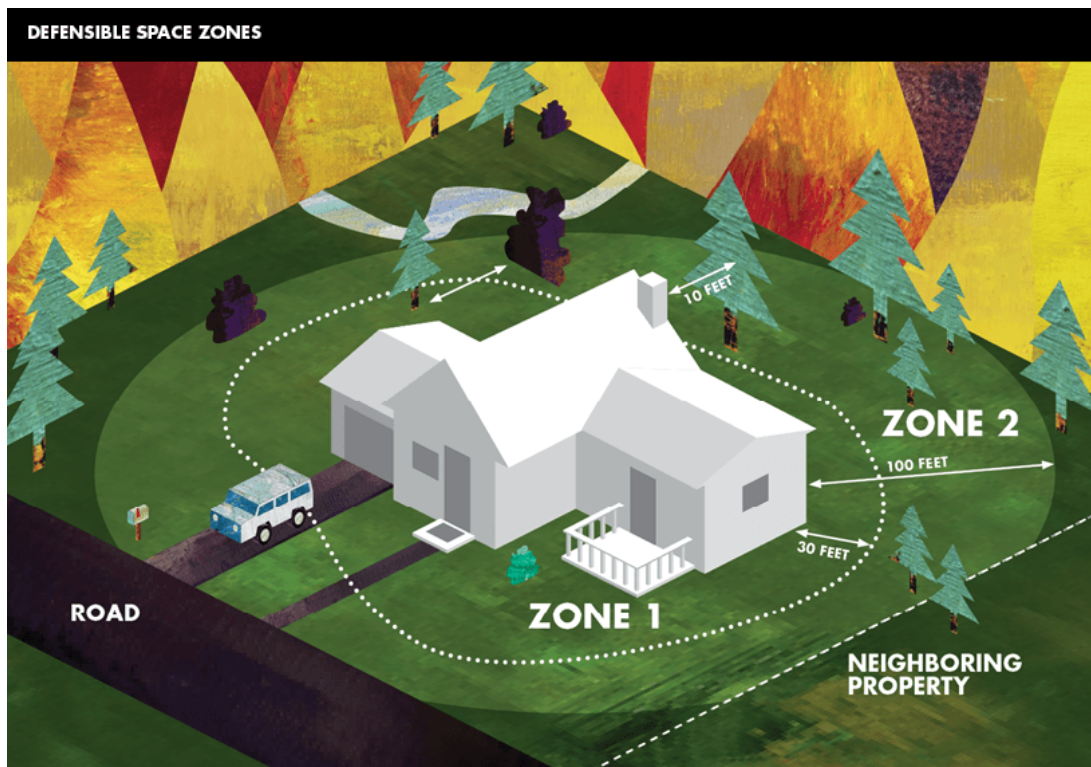
A portion of the Kensington community lies adjacent or near to large wildland areas containing steep slopes and naturally growing vegetation. Every year under certain critical weather conditions, the neighborhoods near these wildland areas are at heightened risk of seasonal wildfire sweeping into the community and burning homes. These areas at heightened risk of wildfire have been designated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones as designated by CAL Fire. Fire hazard reduction measures common to the entire community are required on both vacant and developed lots.

B. Defensible Space

Defensible space is essential to improve your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. It is the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it helps protect your home from catching fire—either from direct flame contact or radiant heat. Defensible space is also important for the protection of the firefighters defending your home.

Defensible Space Zones

Two zones make up the required 100 feet of defensible space.



Zone 1

Zone 1 extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in all portions within the community of Kensington including the designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones. Vacant lots in Zone 1 shall be maintained to be 10 feet wide along the property line.

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Trees shall be maintained so that no portion is closer than 10 feet from any chimney opening.
- Trees, shrubs, bushes or other vegetation adjacent to or overhanging any structure shall be maintained free of dead limbs and other combustible matter such as vines and loose papery bark.
- On mature trees, limbs should be removed up to 10' above the ground. Smaller trees should be limbed to 1/3rd of their height up to 6' above the ground, but in no case less than 18 inches from the ground.
- Relocate wood piles to Zone 2 if applicable.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Create a minimum 6-foot separation between trees, shrubs or vegetation and combustible materials.

Zone 2

Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in only those areas within Kensington designated as the Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones. Vacant lots in Zone 2 shall be maintained to be 30 feet wide along the property line. NOTES: (1) All Zone 1 requirements shall be followed in addition to the following Zone 2 requirements. (2) The vast majority of the entire community of Kensington is in the VHFHSZ.

- Cut or mow weeds and grass shall be cleared to a maximum height of 6 inches.
- All fire hazardous vegetation except for weeds and grass shall be cleared and maintained to a height no greater than 18 inches above the ground.

C. Additional Considerations for Vegetation Management

1. The Fire Hazard Abatement Program is intended to promote community fire safety by reducing the combustible vegetation fuel mass on private properties. Clearing vegetation by heavy construction methods, such as grading, discing, trenching or dozing shall require special permits from the County. **Disposal by burning is not permitted.**
2. Any parcel where slope stability will be threatened by removal of plants may be exempt from treatment requirements or subject to alternate treatments. The property owner must submit a report documenting the probability of slope failure due to vegetation removal, prepared by a licensed civil, geotechnical or soils engineer. The report shall propose alternative treatment methods to address fire hazards. The report will be reviewed by staff. Review and acceptance by the District of alternative treatment will supersede other requirements.
3. Any parcel or lot which includes plant or animal species that are rare, endangered or of special concern may qualify for alternative plant treatment and spacing requirements. The property owner must submit a report from a qualified resource biologist or landscape architect describing the species, actions required to preserve its environmental value, and proposed alternative measures to address fire hazards. The report will be reviewed by the District. Review and acceptance by the District of alternative treatment will supersede other requirements.

D. Planting Considerations

Any plant will burn if the conditions are right. Some plants are considered to be extremely flammable while other plants are considered to have some resistance to fire. Verifiable tests of fire exposure characteristics for all specific ornamental landscaping plants are not available.

The Vegetation Management Standards for the Kensington Fire Protection District utilizes available information from the Diablo Firesafe Council at <http://diablofiresafe.org/tolerance.html> under Table 1 Plants with a Favorable Fire performance Rating in 3 or More References.

At the base of trees and shrubs, replace flammable vegetation with bark, mulch, rock, gravel or low-growing or more fire-resistant ground covers. This cover reduces the fire danger and minimizes weeds.

Avoid placing medium-sized shrubs beneath trees or taller shrubs. By breaking up the available fuel mass in ornamental landscaping, a fire will be kept at lower intensity, flame lengths will be shorter and fire will be less likely to form a continuous line or front.

E. Structural Fire Safety

The District's roofing and vegetation management standards are designed to reduce the amount of airborne burning material, limiting fire spread. Once a fire starts, it is often accelerated by wind-borne burning material.

Burning embers or brands are the main source of fire spread in mixed urban-wildland fires. The roof of a house is most vulnerable to this type of ignition followed by openings such as vents. Spark arresters with a maximum of ½ inch openings in the mesh are required over the outlet of every chimney. Class A is the top rating for fire resistive roofing, followed by Classes B and C. State and District Ordinance requires that all roofing be Class B or better, and wood shake shingle roofing materials are prohibited in new construction or replacement of more than 50% of the roof. It is recommended to cover vent openings with ¼ inch openings in the mesh to prevent flying embers from entering the structure.

III. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms are used to describe the vegetation management standards in California State Law and in the Kensington Fire Protection District's Fire Hazard Reduction Program.

Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones: Any geographic area designated per Government Code Section 51178 to contain the type and condition of vegetation, topography, weather and structure density to potentially increase the possibility of wildland conflagration fires. As a community adjacent to extensive wildland areas, the community of Kensington is made up on mostly VHFHS zones. A CAL Fire interactive map of these zones is available at <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>. Fire hazard reduction standards are more extensive for properties located within VHFHS zones.

Defensible Space: A concept in landscape design for homes which provides a band of managed vegetation around a home that slows movement of fire by reducing or denying fuel and provides a space for firefighters to take a stand to protect the house.

Fire Resistant Plants: A relative term used to describe plants that are “more resistant: or “less resistant” than other plants to fire. Given enough heat, all vegetation will burn. Yet plants in fact differ in how fast they burn, how high a flame they produce and their ability to survive fire. Fire resistance is enhanced by higher amounts of moisture within twigs and foliage. Fire-resistant plants can lose this quality altogether if not properly maintained and irrigated. The Vegetation Management Standards for Kensington utilizes available information from the Diablo Firesafe Council at <http://diablofiresafe.org/tolerance.html> under Table 1 Plants with a Favorable Fire performance Rating in 3 or More References.

Fire Hazardous Vegetation: Plants which can burn easily because they generate dry undergrowth, contain flammable oils or produce significant quantities of dead or dying material. Hazardous vegetation is fuel which must be removed or strictly maintained so as not to constitute a fire hazard by igniting easily and then contributing to rapid fire spread. Seasonally dry grass, weeds, brush, and unmaintained and unirrigated trees and ornamental vegetation are examples of fire hazardous vegetation. Properly chipped, mulched and disbursed material does not constitute fire hazardous vegetation. Fire hazardous vegetation is also known as **flammable vegetation and combustible growth.**

Ornamental Landscaping: Decorative plants growing within a tended garden or yard which are appropriately irrigated, maintained and located to provide aesthetic decoration and functional utility, such as privacy screening, shade, weed suppression and erosion control. The use of fire-resistant plants and the removal of fire hazardous vegetation will enhance fire safety.

Zone 1: Extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in all portions within the community of Kensington including the designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones. In Zone 1 vacant lots shall be maintained to be 10 feet wide along the property line.

Zone 2: Extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in those areas within the community of Kensington designated as the Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones. In Zone 2 vacant lots shall be maintained to be 30 feet wide along the property line. For properties within Zone 2, all Zone 1 requirements shall be enforced in addition to Zone 2 requirements.



Fire Hazard Reduction Checklist



Zone 1 Requirements

Definition: Zone 1 extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in all portions within the community of Kensington including the designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds within 30 feet of buildings, structures, decks, etc.
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters
- Trees shall be maintained so that no portion is closer than 10 feet from any chimney opening
- Trees, shrubs, bushes or other vegetation adjacent to or overhanging any structure shall be maintained free of dead limbs and other combustible matter such as vines and loose papery bark
- On mature trees, limbs should be removed up to 10' above the ground. Smaller trees should be limbed to 1/3rd of their height up to 6' above the ground, but in no case less than 18" from the ground
- Relocate wood piles to Zone 2 if applicable
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks
- Create a minimum 6-foot separation between trees, shrubs or vegetation and combustible materials
- Vacant lots in Zone 1 shall be maintained to be 10 feet wide along the property line

Zone 2 Requirements

Definition: Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. in those areas within the community of Kensington designated as the Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones. NOTE: All Zone 1 requirements shall be followed in addition to the following Zone 2 requirements

- Cut or mow weeds and grass shall be cleared to a maximum height of 6 inches
- All fire hazardous vegetation except for weeds and grass shall be cleared and maintained to a height no greater than 18 inches above the ground
- Vacant lots in Zone 2 shall be maintained to be 30 feet wide along the property line

To find out if your property is located within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, go to <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/> On the upper left hand side, click on the bottom icon for Address Search.