



# EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

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**DATE:** November 2, 2021

**TO:** Bill Hansell: General Manager

**FROM:** Michael Pigoni: Fire Chief

**RE:** **Fire Chief's Report for the November 2021 Fire District Board Meeting**

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## **October Incident Run Reports**

There were 43 incidents in Kensington for the month of October which was an increase of 8 calls over the previous month. Total incidents for Station 65 in August were 67 calls which was an increase of 4 calls over the previous month. Overall, the El Cerrito / Kensington Fire Department responded to 349 calls for service during the month.

## **Storm Effects**

During the month of October, there was an increase of service calls and hazardous conditions related to the two storms, one of which was the "atmospheric river" that brought, depending on the weather source, over 5" of much needed rain. The Fire Department responded to several downed wires, pole fires and flooded yards. On October 24<sup>th</sup>, the Fire Department responded to the corner of Amherst and Arlington for flooding conditions and found a stream of water running down Amherst, through the hardware store parking lot and flooding the business. The problem was a combination of excessive rain, plugged drains and drainages overflowing. Crews used bags of potting soil that were stored in the parking lot to create a diversion to the water and worked at clearing a couple of the drains around the store.

## **Plan Check Costs**

New construction in Kensington has been very limited for several years and the cost for plan and sprinkler checks has been minimal and paid for by the Fire District. However, over the past year the push to build new or convert garages and basements into ADU's is increasing mainly due to recent changes in the regulations at the State level. Over the past few months, the requests or plan checks has increased dramatically. The Fire District may wish to discuss the possibility of adopting a fee schedule and charging for the services, especially plans for fire sprinklers.

## **Evacuation Drills**

During the last couple of Emergency Preparedness Committee meetings, the discussion of holding an evacuation drill has been held. The County OES has participated in these meetings and discussed the possibilities of conducting on in Kensington. At this point with the Holidays approaching, school winter recess and personnel taking vacations, I would suggest that we plan for a drill in the first quarter of 2022. Before the drill, the Board or the EPC would need to discuss the criteria that they would like to see in the drill, such as how many people, time or the week or day, where to go for check in, etc. This would also need to be coordinated with PD as they would be handling the traffic component of the evacuation. Please see the attached separate report for more information on this item.

## Accepting Donations for the U.S. Marines **Toys for Tots** Program



The El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department is working with the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots program to spread the word about the need for monetary donations and donating toys to support families in need. To make an on-line donation, please visit: <https://t.co/QJbf5g2jey>. If you wish to drop off toys for the campaign, they may be dropped off at both El Cerrito Fire Stations and the Kensington Fire Station beginning on November 1. Toy barrels will also be located at the El Cerrito Community

Center, City Hall, and the Police Department. The last drop-off day is December 18. All toys must be new and unwrapped. No toy weapons or stuffed animals are accepted. Donate early so that the Marines have time to sort, shop and deliver. For more information, please contact Fire Captain Damien Carrion at (510) 215-4450.

## COVID-19 Mandates

The County Health Department has loosened the mask requirements among vaccinated personnel. The Fire Department continues to enforce masks inside the fire station and apparatus if anyone is not vaccinated and for all visitors to the Station. Those unvaccinated are still being tested in house at the start of their shifts. The Delta variant surge continues to decline in the County as are the number in the hospitals and ICU beds. County records show that since March of last year, 98 residents in the community have tested positive with no deaths. Crews however will continue to wear full PPE on all medical calls in addition to the mandates in the stations.

## Battalion Chief Interviews

The Fire Department completed interviews in October for candidates applying for the two vacant Battalion Chief positions. The business management consultant firm Peckham & McKenney reported that there were 26 applicants of which 7 at this time were offered interviews. We are planning on making an offer for the Battalion Chief/Fire Marshal position within the week.

## Out of County Deployment

With the recent rains and snow throughout the State, the fire threat has greatly diminished and in fact many Counties and agencies have declared an end of Fire Season. There have been no new major fires since early October, however, there are crews still monitoring many of the fire locations, it is more for possible debris flow or slides. While the Fire Department has no one deployed, so far this year personnel have responded 20 times to 9 different fires and have logged over 8,100 hours throughout California.

## Fire Season

The 2021 Fire Season started off early this year and was on track to break last year's records. At this time there have been over 8,200 incidents this year and approximately 2,500,000 acres have burned. Thankfully the early rains have slowed this down. There were also over 3,600 structures that were damaged or destroyed and only 3 fatalities due to the fires reported.

## Register with the Contra Costa County Community Warning System

It cannot be stressed enough the importance to take a moment to register cell phones with the Contra Costa County Community Warning System (CWS). CWS will alert you when life-threatening incidents, like wildfire or power shutdowns, occur. [www.cwsalerts.com](http://www.cwsalerts.com)