

The Fire Plug



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Vegetation Management = Fire Prevention

Spring and summer are quickly approaching. Along with the nice spring weather, comes beautiful flowers, gardens, and, of course, the dreaded weeds. Every year, the rapid growth of noxious weeds and vegetation create an extreme fire risk in Kensington. When coupled with the pending drought condition in the state of California, the need to reduce the risk of wildfire takes on an even greater significance in the community.



Specifically, Kensington contains wildland intermix areas which increase the community's risk of loss from devastating fire that could result from the combination of current environmental conditions and a lack of attention to property maintenance. These areas have been identified by the California Department of Forestry (CDF) and the Kensington Fire District as Very High Fire Hazard Severity (VHFHS) Zones. As specified by State Law AB 337, property owners within these zones must take special precautions with their property, including vegetation management, to reduce the risk of fire.

A key goal of local community fire protection planning is to reduce the

level of fire hazards in Kensington's wildland intermix areas (VHFHS Zones). While it is not possible to eliminate all threats of catastrophic wildfire, fire hazards can be reduced to acceptable levels and still allow for a "green" Kensington. Vegetation management, through the limitation of fuel size and increasing separation between combustible fuels, makes it more difficult for fires to ignite and limits the rate at which fires will grow.

Fires will continue to be a part of California urban living. Through vegetation management, Kensington residents can significantly reduce the potential of a small fire growing into a catastrophic event involving one or more structures. In order to assist you in planning and developing a defensible space for your home, please pickup a copy of our 'Defensible Space Brochure' from any El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Station.

Should you need additional guidance in resolving the fire hazard on your property, please contact Fire Prevention Captain David Ciappara at 215-4457. A copy of the Kensington Vegetation Management Standards can also be obtained at www.kensingtonfire.org under Safety Tips.

Remember, "You Make the Difference" in keeping your home, your neighborhood, and our Community 'Wildfire Safe'.

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Smoke/CO Detectors Save Lives

Most fatal home fires and carbon monoxide (CO) accidents occur at night, while people are asleep. Poisonous gases and smoke from a fire can numb the senses in a very short time, putting people into a deeper sleep. Every home needs devices that can wake people up in time to escape from fire or the build-up of carbon monoxide. Smoke and CO detectors really do save lives!

Smoke detectors are designed to alert you to the fact that there is a fire in the house. You should have a smoke detector in each bedroom and on each story of your house (including the basement or attic). CO alarms detect carbon monoxide, an invisible, odorless, colorless gas. Sources of CO include heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel, and vehicles or generators running in an attached garage. CO detectors should be installed outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. It's extremely important to test and clean all detectors and change the batteries regu-

larly. An easy way to remember to replace the batteries is to do so when you adjust your clocks for daylight saving time (spring and fall). The detectors themselves should be replaced approximately every ten years. Always be sure to follow the manufacturer's recommendations for installation, testing, maintenance and disposal of the detectors.



In an effort to insure that everyone has working smoke detectors in their homes, the Kensington Fire Protection District has a smoke detector program that supplies and installs smoke detectors for senior or disabled persons upon request. For more information, call 215-4450.

National Drug Take-Back Initiative

KFPD and KPPCSD will be holding a free community pharmaceutical drop-off event on **Saturday, April 26, 2014.**

We will be accepting unwanted/expired medications through the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's "Got Drugs?" national take-back initiative that is held twice a year..

Drop off is between the hours of **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** at the Kensington Fire Station, 217 Arlington Avenue, Kensington. No questions are asked.

We are now able to accept **all** medications including narcotics. Please be sure to put any used sharps into a container and please no drop-offs other than during the designated time.



It is important not to flush your unwanted medications down the toilet, as they will pollute our drinking water and ground soil. Unwanted medications left in your medicine cabinet put children and teens at risk. Call 215-4450 with any questions regarding this event.

We do not accept any household hazardous waste.

KFPD Earns Special District Honors

The Kensington Fire Protection District has recently been re-accredited as a District of Distinction and we have also received the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence. Sherry Sterrett, Special District Leadership Foundation and CSDA Board member, made this presentation at the quarterly Contra Costa Special Districts Association January 27, 2014 meeting.

In a time where proper fiscal management and responsibility in public agencies is paramount and the task of governing these agencies has become even more complex, regulated, and costly, it has become increasingly important to demonstrate to constituents that districts have sound fiscal management policies and practices in place among other areas of importance in district operations.

The accreditation criterion gets to the heart of best practices in public agencies and demonstrate that the Kensington Fire Protection District:

- Understands and respects the responsibilities inherent in providing essential public services.
- Has clean financial audits and operates in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner.
- Is conscious of the ever-changing operating environment by having current and relevant policies and procedures in place that conform to all statutes and regulations under state law.
- Places an emphasis on continuing education completed by enrolling each of the district's board members and executive staff in ethics, governance and leadership training.
- Focuses on having sound policies in the areas of governance, board conduct, district finances, transparency and reserves.

The District of Distinction accreditation is designed as a way for districts to highlight their prudent fiscal practices along with other areas important to effectively operate and govern a special district.



KFPD Board members and staff receiving awards from CSDA Board member.

Annual Shredding Event

KFPD will be holding another community "shredding event" for Kensington residents on **Saturday, April 5, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.**

In our on-going efforts to assist our community become more fire safe, a mobile document shredding truck will be located at the north end of the community center/library parking lot that day (across from Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Avenue).

Residents are encouraged to clear out old files and papers from their homes and bring them to the shredding truck to be securely and safely disposed.

All paper shredding is recycled by returning it to a paper mill.

KFPD will also have Vial of Life packets and 24-Hour Emergency Kits on hand if you have not yet received yours. Call 215-4450 with any questions about this service.



**KENSINGTON FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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Kensington, CA 94708

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*When in Doubt—
Call Us Out!*

We're on the Web!
www.kensingtonfire.org



Community Emergency Response Team Training

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Boot Camp is designed to provide those participants who cannot dedicate the required 20 hours for full training.

This non-certified, one-day training will introduce participants to CERT in all program areas including disaster first aid training, disaster preparedness, turning off utilities, and search in rescue in a condensed format.

Boot Camp will take place on Saturday, **April 12, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** at the El Cerrito Senior Center, 6500 Stockton Avenue, El Cerrito. Another class will take place in the fall on November 8, 2014.

Call 215-4450 or email fire@kensingtonfire.org to register for this informative free class!



