



THE FIRE PLUG

Spring Edition | 2023
www.kensingtonfire.org



KENSINGTON
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

IN THIS ISSUE

PAPER SHREDDING EVENT SATURDAY APRIL 29TH 10am-1pm

LOCATION CHANGED

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
1 LAWSON ROAD KENSINGTON**

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Thinking of risk in the fire service; Threats, Consequences, and Vulnerabilities.

The concept of risk has evolved significantly since John Maynard Keynes published his seminal text, “A treatise on probability,” in 1909. Through the lens of a mathematical model, Keynes defined risk as a function of probability and negative consequences. Keynes’s model uses Laplacian probability, a derivation of Pascal’s triangle, the original form of probability from the 1600s. Laplacian probability uses historical data to estimate the likeness of future events. Said in another way, Keynes’s concept of risk is grounded in how often events occur. Events with a high frequency of occurrence produce a high probability and, therefore, an increased risk. This definition of risk remains stable in domains such as economics and finance.

However, the limitations of Laplacian probability outside of basic game theory become evident when looking at historical catastrophes such as WWI, 9-11, and the 2008 financial crisis. Professor of finance and risk engineering, Nasim Taleb, coined these events “Black Swans.” Black Swans are events destined to happen due to circumstances but have no historical data to validate their presence. Keynes’s probabilistic definition of risk is blind to Talib’s Black Swans because they are not part of the possible data set.

After 9-11, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) acknowledged the limitation of older definitions of risk. As a result, it adopted a framework for risk based on the three elements; “threats, consequences, and vulnerabilities,” or TCV. Designed to see the realities of our current environment, TCV allows us to respond to novel and emergent events. Due to its flexibility and application outside game theory, the fire service is slowly adapting the TCV frame to mitigate risk.

For example, the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) uses the three-part construct to decrease risk during wildfire season. When OES gets a forecast of hot, dry winds coming from Utah and Nevada, terminating into San Francisco bay, OES categorizes the winds as a threat, or (T). As the hot winds accelerate over ridgelines, they threaten the lives and homes of residents. The lives and homes are categorized and quantified as consequences, or (C). OES cannot affect the threat (T) or consequences (C), but it can decrease the vulnerabilities (V) by making notifications and increasing local response capacity by staffing extra fire engines.

Decreasing vulnerabilities is what the fire service does in the risk framework. The fire service cannot move the homes or change the wind, but it can create building codes, “defensible space,” and respond with fire engines if a fire breaks out. The impending threat and devastating consequences of fire and earthquakes cause Kensington to rank among the highest-threat cities in the nation. Fortunately, Kensington also supports an ISO Class 1 fire department and multiple volunteer groups to reduce its vulnerabilities. The firefighters and the Emergency Preparedness Committee decrease the risk in Kensington. Like the white blood cells in an organism, the fire department and community groups are constantly scanning the environment and preparing for any novel event that history may miss.

When people tell me that something is “low risk” because it never happened, I remind them that the frequency of occurrence does not equal risk. Most people’s house fire is their first, and risk is not about how often something happens but rather the state of the environment.

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So if you see a volunteer group member such as the Emergency Preparedness Committee, CERT, or the Kensington Fire Protection Board, please thank them for keeping you safe. They volunteer to time and work closely with the fire department to ensure your safety and security by constantly thinking about threats, consequences, and vulnerabilities.

Thank you,
Fire Chief Eric Saylor

Chief Saylor has 27 years in the fire service. He is a paramedic, a hazmat specialist, and a special rescue technician with two associate degrees, a bachelor's in finance, a master's in security studies from the Naval Postgraduate School, and is a Doctoral candidate at USC. He teaches fire chiefs classes for the state fire marshal and has published over twenty articles on homeland security and fire service topics.



Wildcat Firewise Earns Recognition

A region within Kensington and El Cerrito has earned the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recognition as a Firewise community.

The Wildcat Firewise community is located in the northeast corner of Kensington and the southeast corner of El Cerrito. Firewise communities are formed by taking appropriate measures to become more resistant to wildfire structural damage. The recognition follows an application process that involves assembling a board or committee of volunteers to represent the community, identifying the community boundaries, completing a community wildfire risk assessment with the fire department, and developing a three-year action plan identifying and prioritizing actions to reduce ignition risk to homes.

There are benefits to becoming a Firewise community which include but are not limited to insurance discounts, access to funding and assistance, and building a sense of pride among residents. The Kensington Fire Protection District recognizes this program as an

excellent framework for the community to empower residents to work with each other to raise awareness about wildfire risk and proactively protect the community.

Wildcat Firewise has a robust three-year action plan focusing on education and outreach, knowledge sharing among neighbors, developing a non-profit financial structure to pursue financial resources, and even a task force to lobby PG&E for undergrounding power lines. Wildcat Firewise's action plan will be an excellent template for other future Kensington Firewise communities.

If you'd like more information about forming a Firewise community in your neighborhood, contact prepare@kensingtonfire.org or visit www.kensingtonfire.org/volunteer.

Kensington Fire Volunteer Opportunities

A new webpage has been created on the Kensington Fire Protection District website to provide residents with a centralized location to learn more about volunteer opportunities related to emergency preparedness and fire prevention.

This page empowers Kensington residents to take action and work collaboratively to heighten awareness of wildfire risk and improve disaster resiliency. This page is beneficial to the new Kensington residents that may need to be fully aware of all the activities focused on emergency preparedness and fire prevention. Did you know some Kensington residents monitor the ALERT Wildfire cameras to provide early detection of a wildfire in Wildcat Canyon? Did you know there are training opportunities to help prepare for disasters? We invite you to visit the website and explore what your neighbors are doing to help make Kensington safer. There may be an opportunity that interests you also to get more involved. Learn more at www.kensingtonfire.org/volunteer.

Expired Fire Extinguishers Disposal

Expired fire extinguishers must be taken to El Cerrito Recycling Center at 7501 Schmidt Lane for hazardous material disposal. Bring expired fire extinguishers to the center on Tuesdays from 9-4pm with your ID to prove residence.

You may also use the West Contra Costa County Hazardous Waste Facility located at 101 Pittsburg Avenue, Richmond CA 94801.

For more information, visit www.kensingtonfire.org/extinguishers

El Cerrito/Kensington CERT Water Storage and Fire Extinguisher Sale

El Cerrito/Kensington CERT, in partnership with Lamorinda CERT, has an open sale for emergency water storage and fire extinguishers. This sale promotes emergency preparedness, specifically for earthquakes impacting water supply infrastructure.

Residents are stocking up on potable water for emergencies, and the kits sold contain supplies for water treatment and long-term storage. Through these sales, it's possible to buy containers ranging from 2.5 gallons to 55-gallon drums. Place an order now before Noon on April 27th by visiting www.kensingtonfire.org/suppliesale. Look for the link to register for notifications about future sales.

RedFlag Warning Email List

The Kensington Fire Protection District initiated a Red Flag Warning Email program to notify residents of weather conditions and other potential hazards that may require action at home before an emergency arises. Since the program started, over 530 Kensington residents have subscribed to this email list. These emails help residents prepare and remind them of specific actions to take in anticipation of an emergency. Reminding the community that this email program is not the primary emergency notification is essential. It is an additional tool for emergency preparedness. Contra Costa County's Community Warning System (CWS) is the primary warning system for our community during an emergency. If you have not done so already, register for the County's CWS Alerts by visiting www.cwsalerts.com or calling 925-655-0111. Subscribe to the KFPD Red Flag Warning Emails by visiting www.kensingtonfire.org/redflag.

Defensible Space Inspections

Kensington residents should expect a letter regarding vegetation management standards and annual inspections. The El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department will focus on actual inspections in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone areas throughout the community.

The vegetation management standards, fire hazard reduction guidelines, and checklist can be found online at: www.kensingtonfire.org/vegetation-management.

CPR/First Aid Training

CPR/First Aid Training classes are offered throughout the year. Registration is necessary and space is limited. Priority registration is available for Kensington and El Cerrito residents. The processing fee is \$55 for CPR and \$110 for CPR/First Aid for El Cerrito and Kensington residents. Non-residents will pay \$65 for The next scheduled sessions will be held on Saturday, June 24, 2023 and Saturday, September 2, 2023. For more information or to sign up, please contact the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department at (510) 215-4450.

Paper Shredding Event

The Kensington Fire Protection District will conduct a paper shredding event on Saturday, April, 29th from 10:00am-1:00pm. **Please note the location has changed to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley at 1 Lawson Road in Kensington.** The Pharmaceutical collection portion of this event has been cancelled, all expired pharmaceuticals must be taken to a collection site at a participating pharmacy or waste disposal center.

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KENSINGTON
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KENSINGTON PREPAREDNESS METRICS

Your input helps guide our planning. Please participate.

In May 2021 and April 2022, the KFPD and El Cerrito Fire Department surveyed participating households as part of the Community Warning System Test and Wildfire Evacuation Drill. The results provided will give emergency planners valuable insight as to how well prepared residents are, how they may react during an actual evacuation and how we can best assist YOU to prepare.

We'd like to see how the interests and preparedness actions taken evolve over time across the entire community. Please take this survey even if you've completed one like it before and share it with neighbors. The survey is accessible via the QR or the link below. Thank you!

www.kensingtonfire.org/survey

