



EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

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DATE: July 6, 2022

TO: Bill Hansell: General Manager

FROM: Jose Castrejon: Interim Fire Chief

RE: **Fire Chief's Report for the July 2022 Fire District Board Meeting**

June Incident Run Reports

There were 34 incidents that occurred during the month of June in the community of Kensington. This is a decrease of two incidents from the previous month. Engine 165 responded to a total of 71 incidents in June in all communities which is an increase of six incidents over the previous month. Overall, the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department has responded to 1,952 calls for service so far this year. The primary area of calls for service continues to be medical emergencies and assists.

Vegetation Inspections

The Fire Department has completed the first and second rounds of residential inspections for compliance with the District's Vegetation Management Policy. Residents with properties that were found to be out of compliance have been notified and will move on to the public hearing phase. State Law requires compliance in "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones" at all times. This includes annual grasses and weeds are required to be always cut and maintained to a height of 4" to 6". While this entails more frequent maintenance the benefit is a reduced risk of a fire while mowing. Mowing grasses before noon also lowers the fire risk of unintentionally starting a fire. For more information on the District's website as well as Cal Fire's website on safe practices around the home to create a safe environment.

COVID-19 Mandates

COVID infections remained steady for the month of June. There have been no new deaths reported in Kensington from the virus at this time. Twenty-one new cases were reported in the last 14 days bringing the positive test count to 417 in the community. The County and the Fire Department have relaxed some of their protocols, though the Department continues to test all non-vaccinated personnel at the start of their shift and requires masks to be worn on all responses.

Fire Season

June has brought increased fire activity in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. The "Scenic" fire near Port Costa burned 108 acres prompting an evacuation warning for the town of Port Costa. A fire along I-80 in Hercules also prompted evacuations of nearby homes. Lastly, a fire on Albany Hill also caused several residents to be evacuated. Thanks to a quick response by both local and neighboring fire departments all three of the fires were quickly brought under control. No structures were damaged as a result of these fires. These events show the importance of maintaining a robust automatic and mutual-aid system.

Fire Personnel

This month the fire department welcomed our newest member Firefighter Jorge Arechiga. Jorge brings five years of experience from Cal Fire in Napa County. He was assigned to Station 26 in Saint Helena and was also a member of the Boggs Mountain Helitack. Jorge will be finishing his field training in mid-July.

Engineer Paramedic Gary Johnson retired after 20 years of service to the communities of Kensington and El Cerrito. Gary finished his career working out of Station 71 in El Cerrito.

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