



EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

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DATE: February 11, 2023

TO: Mary Morris-Mayorga: Interim General Manager

FROM: Eric Saylor: Fire Chief

RE: **Fire Chief's Report for the February 2023 Fire District Board Meeting**

Operations

During the *California Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides*, the El-Cerrito/Kensington Fire department (ECKFD) responded to flood calls and removed water from residential and commercial buildings, protecting the buildings and the businesses.

During the storms, OES funded a pre-staged strike team for the area consisting of five units and one command unit. The command unit and one type three engine were housed at station 72 to protect the Kensington area.

On January 31, ECKFD contained a structure fire at 208 Stanford Avenue, Kensington. The structure fire threatened four neighboring homes. The steep hills, narrow roads, downslope nature of the construction, and high density of homes made the firefight difficult. The fire took three ECKFD fire engines, two Richmond fire engines, one Berkley fire engine, two ECKFD Chiefs, one Richmond Battalion Chief, and one Contra Costa County Fire Battalion Chief to suppress. The number of fire units above is the minimum response to a working fire in a Very High Fire Severity Zone such as Kensington. There were no injuries or fatalities resulting from the fire. The four exposed homes saved by ECKFD are worth an estimated \$4.5 million.

The availability of ambulances to the Kensington community continues to be a challenge. The Albany ambulance could not respond to the ECKFD district when requested twice in January. The Albany ambulance is a backup to Kensington when Contra Costa County Fire Department ambulances are unavailable. The result was a roughly 45-minute wait for an ambulance into the district. The administration continues to search for options to staff station 65 with a transporting unit to ensure the community's safety.

Administration

Contra Costa County residents are approved for Individual Assistance from FEMA. Residents can apply for a series of programs to seek assistance for storm-related damages. Residents must apply through FEMA directly. Residents who have sustained property and business damage from the series of Winter storms can seek assistance directly from FEMA. Residents should apply online at www.disasterassistance.org or call 1-800- 621-3362. Applying does not guarantee that assistance will be awarded.

If you have additional questions, this link will take you to a FEMA flyer that explains all the available programs: https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema_help-after-disaster_english_trifold.pdf

Training

ECKFD assisted Kensington Police Department (KPD) in receiving Narcan training. Narcan is a medication used in the treatment of opioid overdose. Synthetic opioids such as fentanyl have the potential to kill from brief exposure to skin or mucus membranes. The rates of overdose deaths from opioids have increased by 1800% since 2013. Synthetic opioids account for 82% of all opioid-involved deaths. Synthetic opioids found in

suspects' possession are a growing life and safety threat to law enforcement officers in the field and storage facilities. The Department of Homeland Security is considering Synthetic opioids as having the potential for domestic terrorism. An event in El-Cerrito in January exposed a police officer to Fentanyl power found on a suspect. The officer immediately received Narcan and was transported to the hospital via ambulance. ECKFD and KPD will continue to partner closely to ensure the safety of our firefighters and officers when it comes to the discovery and storage of evidence that may contain opioids.

Citizen Engagement

ECKFD is planning to start Cert Training in the mid-year of 2023 if an appropriate location is found. Cert training will happen at St 65 once the construction is complete, and we will collaborate with our neighboring Cert programs in Berkeley and Richmond.