



EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

10900 San Pablo Avenue ▪ El Cerrito ▪ CA ▪ 94530
(510) 215-4450 ▪ FAX (510) 232-4917

www.el-cerrito.org



DATE: July 17, 2024

TO: Mary Morris-Mayorga: General Manager

FROM: Eric Saylor: Fire Chief

RE: **Fire Chief's Report for the July 2024 Fire District Board Meeting**

Operations

Starting June 30, OES funded the staffing of a prepositioned strike team in the county in response to a heat wave, red flag days, and July 4. The strike team consisted of five type 3 engines and a battalion chief. El Cerrito/Kensington firefighters volunteered to staff E352, one of the type 3 engines, providing additional protection for our community. E352 ran out of station 52 in El Cerrito. Since the Tubbs fire (Coffee Park and Santa Rosa), OES has increased the funding of prepositioned strike teams on extreme weather days and will likely continue the practice to protect vulnerable communities. The Tubbs fire preceded a known weather event and caused 22 deaths, 5643 burned structures, and 1.3 billion in damages.



Engine 352 is a type 3 engine that can pump and drive and go off road.

On June 10 at 4:30 pm, E51 (OES 413) and BC 5 responded to a three-story apartment fire in San Pablo as part of a first-alarm commercial fire response. On arrival, visible flames were coming from a third-floor window. The fire engines advanced hose lines into the hallway to hold the fire in check while the fire trucks performed vertical ventilation and search. The fire displaced 20 residences and significantly damaged the third floor. The intense heat in the hallway burned the skin of two firefighters; they were seen at a hospital and released. It took the combined efforts of El Cerrito/Kensington, Richmond, and Contra County fire to remove the victims of the building and suppress the fire.



The initial view showed a working fire venting from a window

Mission: Protect Lives and Property
Integrity Accountability Teamwork Respect Professionalism



EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

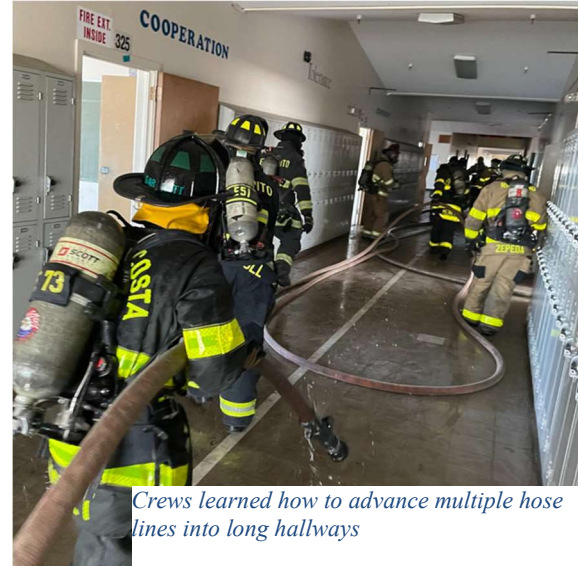
10900 San Pablo Avenue • El Cerrito • CA • 94530
(510) 215-4450 • FAX (510) 232-4917

www.el-cerrito.org



Training

On June 1 and 17, the El Cerrito/Kensington fire department led a multi-company drill focused on commercial fires. Commercial buildings offer multiple challenges for firefighters, including wide open spaces, high ceilings, diverse types of construction, high fire loads, and spontaneous structural collapse. These factors threaten the survival of firefighters and require specific tactics to survive, including larger hose lines, specific search techniques, and increased resources. Evidence suggests firefighters are twice as likely to die in a commercial fire than other fires. The minimum number of units to suppress a commercial fire is five engines, two trucks, and two Battalion chiefs. On June 1, Engines 51, 52, 64, 66, 70, 73, Quint 76, and BCs 5 and 7 participated in the drill at the Adams Jr. High. June 17th E51, E55, E64, E73, T68, T70, Q76, BC7, BC5, and SOF-1 participated. The drill was a working first-alarm commercial structure fire with rescue. Two drills occurred each day and focused on training our probationary firefighters, conducting wide area searches, large hose line deployment, and roof operations. Numerous commercial buildings in Kensington have the potential to spread to neighboring buildings, causing an upslope, house-to-house fire if not suppressed quickly. A commercial fire in Kensington requires a rapid attack and assistance from Richmond, Contra Costa County, Berkeley, and Albany fire departments.



Crews learned how to advance multiple hose lines into long hallways



Crews learn how to access the roof via an aerial truck.

Mission: Protect Lives and Property
Integrity Accountability Teamwork Respect Professionalism



EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

10900 San Pablo Avenue • El Cerrito • CA • 94530
 (510) 215-4450 • FAX (510) 232-4917

www.el-cerrito.org



Administration

ECKFD is closely monitoring potential changes to OSHA law, where OSHA is proposing folding two in/two out into a new safety and health standard, titled *Emergency Response Standard*. The new standard would directly impact fire department operations and staffing levels. Currently, the ECKFD staffs units with a minimum of 3 firefighters. Under the current rules, ECKFD can initiate a fire attack and search a house fire before the next fire engine arrives if we suspect a victim may be in the building. The update to the law would only allow a three-person crew to enter a fire "for the rescue of a person in imminent peril only, where team members or responders **observe** or are **informed** by a **witness** of the imminent life hazard."

This new standard would require the fire department to either increase minimum staffing to four-person engines, such as Berkeley Fire is currently pursuing, or wait outside until an additional unit arrives. Waiting for the next engine will significantly decrease victim survival, increase firefighter risk, and increase fire spread. Modern house fires burn hotter and faster due to synthetic materials. Flashover has increased from twelve minutes to less than five minutes.



Underwriters Laboratory comparison of a legacy furniture vs modern furniture

	Firefighters			Civilians
	Advancing hose – Interior	Search	Collapse during ventilation	
2021	5	3	0	3800
2020	5	0	0	3500
2019	5	0	1	3700
2018	6	1	0	3655
2017	0	1	0	3400
2016	2	2	0	3390
2015	4	2	1	3280
2014	9	2	0	3275
2013	9	4	1	3240
2012	4	0	0	2855
Average/ Year	4.9	1.5	0.3	3410

Source: Data Not Drama. Bill Carey

Source: NFPA

Annual firefighter and civilian deaths in house fires



EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

10900 San Pablo Avenue • El Cerrito • CA • 94530
(510) 215-4450 • FAX (510) 232-4917

www.el-cerrito.org



Prevention – Inspections and ISO ratings

El Cerrito/Kensington fire completed its first round of lot inspections in the very high fire severity zone (VHFSZ) per local ordinances and AB 3074. Our prevention officers inspected 8,412 properties (2,199 in Kensington) and issued 144 mitigation notices. AB 3074 requires the inspections of properties in the VHFSZ according to regulations of Zone 1 and Zone 2 (California Fire Code C. 49, Veg Management sec 4906). Zone 1 regulates combustibles within 30 feet of the home, and Zone 2 regulates combustibles from 30 and 100 feet of the house. Zone 0 is intended to regulate combustibles within 5 feet of the home but has not been established by the California State Fire Marshal. The current estimate for Zone 0 regulation is late 2026.



Map of Zone 0, 1, and 2

ISO Rating Explained

El Cerrito/Kensington's robust inspection program is a model in the region that is more stringent than the State Fire Marshal's code and a contributor to the department's Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating. Through the Public Protection Classification (PPC) program, the ISO evaluates the quality of roughly 47,500 fire departments in the United States, assigning a rating from 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest rating. Statistical data on insurance losses prove a relationship between excellent fire protection and low fire losses. Insurance companies use the rating to establish premiums. A department's rating is a proven and reliable predictor of future fire losses, offering lower premiums in communities with higher ratings.

A fire department's most significant impact on home insurance is its ISO rating!

The El Cerrito/Kensington's fire department ISO rating is 1, the highest archivable score. Less than one percent of the fire departments in the nation receive a rating of 1, and ECKFD is the only department with a rating of 1 in the region. The high rating has a significant positive impact on home insurance. Amidst an insurance crisis in the state, where communities such as Morgana/Orinda face a roughly 60% canceling rate, maintaining ECKFD's ISO rating is a top priority. The rating directly results from the city of El Cerrito's records management system, training events, training records, staffing levels, equipment levels, equipment maintenance, water supply testing, and prevention efforts. The community of Kensington inherits the ISO 1 rating through the service contract.





Chiefs Report July 2024

EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mission: Protect Lives and Property

Integrity Accountability Teamwork Respect Professionalism

Operations

- OES Strike Team
- E352
 - Tubbs Fire
 - 22 deaths
 - 5643 structures
 - 1.3 billion



Operations

June 10th

- Commercial fire
- 3 Story Apartment
- BC 5 and E51
- 20 displaced
- 2 burned firefighters (Richmond)



Training



June 1st and June 17th

- Commercial Building training
 - Wide area searches
 - Large hose lines
 - Roof operations
- 5 engines, 2 trucks, and 2 BC's
 - El Cerrito
 - Richmond
 - Contra Costa County Fire
- FF's Twice as like to die



Administration

OSHA

- Emergency Response Standard
- 4 person crews or wait

“for the rescue of a person in imminent peril only, where team members or responders observe or are informed by a witness of the imminent life hazard.”

 **HOME FURNISHING COMPARISON** 

NATURAL  04:47 **SYNTHETIC**

Administration

OSHA

- Emergency Response Standard
- Decrease survivability
- Increase FF fatalities
- Increase fire spread

FIREGROUND DEATHS

	Firefighters			Civilians
	Advancing hose – Interior	Search	Collapse during ventilation	
2021	5	3	0	3800
2020	5	0	0	3500
2019	5	0	1	3700
2018	6	1	0	3655
2017	0	1	0	3400
2016	2	2	0	3390
2015	4	2	1	3280
2014	9	2	0	3275
2013	9	4	1	3240
2012	4	0	0	2855
Average/ Year	4.9	1.5	0.3	3410

Source: Data Not Drama. Bill Carey

Source: NFPA

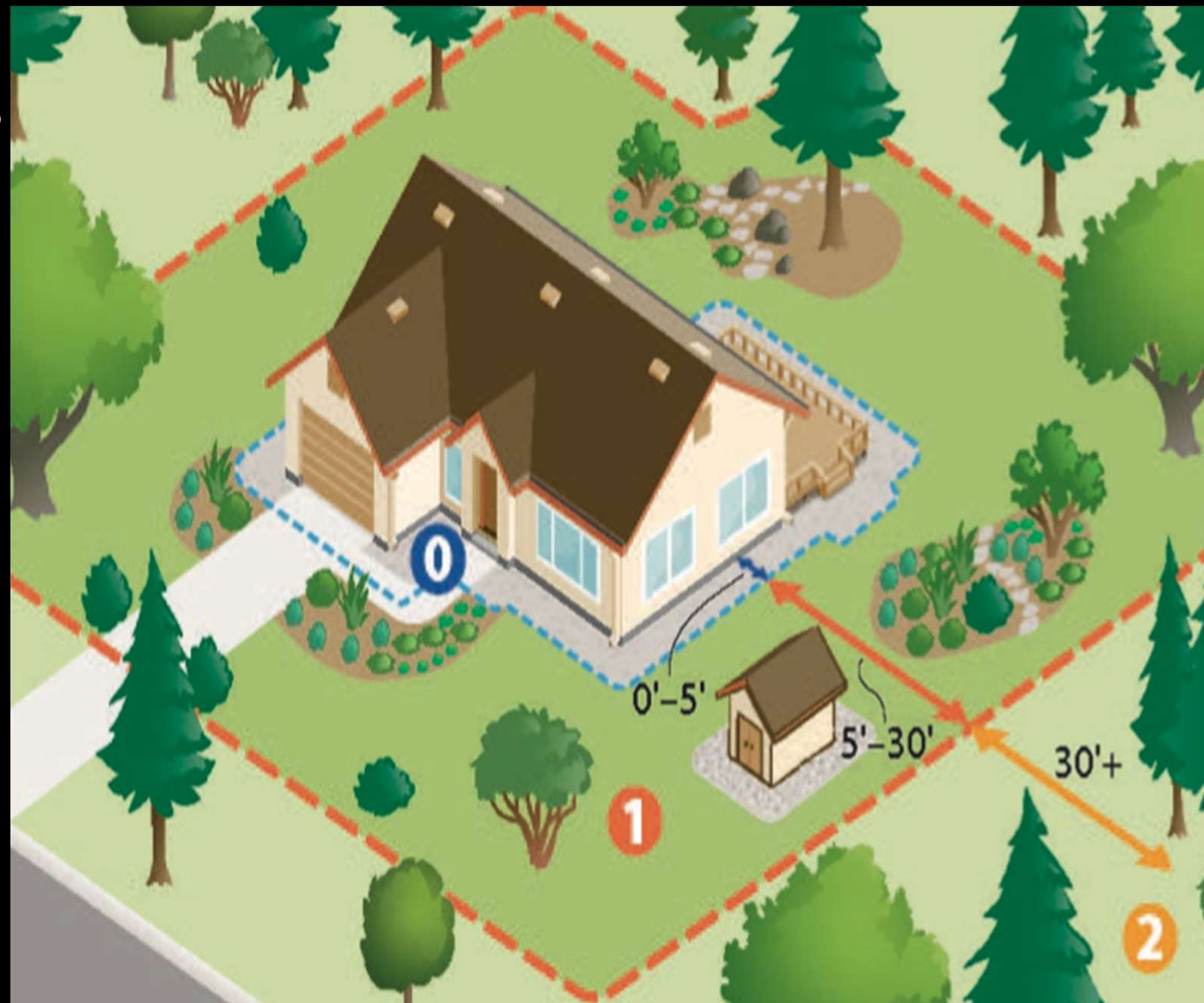
Prevention Zones

8412 Inspections

- 2199 in Kensington
- AB 3074

California Fire Code C.
49, Veg Management
sec 4906

- Zone 1 and 2
- Zone 0



Prevention - ISO rating

Insurance Service Office

- Class from 1-10
- 47,000 departments
- Proven decrease in fire loss
- Impact rates and coverage

El Cerrito Class 1

- RMS
- Training events
- Training records
- Staffing levels
- Equipment
- Equipment maintenance
- Water supply testing
- Prevention efforts



Thank you for Support
And Partnership



Mission: Protect Lives and Property

Integrity Accountability Teamwork Respect Professionalism