



# EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

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**DATE:** July 6, 2021

**TO:** Bill Hansell: General Manager

**FROM:** Michael Pigoni: Fire Chief

**RE:** **Fire Chief's Report for the July 2021 Fire District Board Meeting**

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## **June Incident Run Report**

There were 24 incidents in Kensington for the month of June. This was an increase of 7 calls over the previous month. Total incidents for Station 65 in April were 69 calls which was an increase of 16 calls over the previous month. Overall, the El Cerrito / Kensington Fire Department responded to 319 calls for service during the month.

## **Retirement**

Battalion Chief Joseph Grupalo has announced that he is retiring effective July 18. Joe started with El Cerrito – Kensington Fire in October of 2008 as a firefighter and promoted up the ranks to Battalion Chief in 2019. Upon retirement, Joe has accepted a position with Zonehaven, the company the Department has been working with to build out zones for evacuation plans. Joe has been very instrumental in the initial set up of the zones for our area as El Cerrito – Kensington along with Moraga-Orinda Fire were the first agencies to benefit from this new system. He will be missed, and his departure now places even more duties on the two remaining Battalion Chiefs. We will be starting a process to replace him soon. Please wish Joe well on his new journey.

## **July 4 Fire Department Staffing**

Due to the premature dryness of the fuels in our hillsides, the Fire Department staffed Engine 365 as a second engine on July 4. The purpose of this engine was to conduct patrols for any illegal fireworks as well as provide additional personnel for any potential fires. In addition to this increased staffing, several other agencies in the County also increased their staffing as well as the County had a strike team of engines, a hand crew, dozer and helicopter available to respond anywhere in the County. Cal-Fire also increased their staffing for the entire weekend and will be available for additional resources had they be needed. Thankfully, the weather was mild and while parts of the County and cities around us experienced extensive use of illegal fireworks, there were no incidents in the Community.

## **Out of County Deployment**

As all aware, there are numerous fires burning both up north near the Oregon border as well as in the Los Angeles County area. No engines have been deployed yet, however, on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, Battalion Chief Kevin Janes was deployed to the Beckwourth Complex fire in Plumas County where two lighting fires, the Dotta and Sugar Fires are burning. Crews are making great progress on these fires but there is the threat of more lighting in the next few days.

## **Vegetation Management**

As reported out last month, the local vegetation fuel moisture levels continue to drop and are at late summer levels even with the recent marine layers returning at night. Due to these conditions, we are continuing with residential inspections of properties in the community to get 100% compliance before the super critical late summer/fall heat and Diablo winds. All residents are urged to cut weeds, trim bushes, and prune up tree limbs to

develop a defensible space around their homes and property. Based on these ongoing inspections, it appears that residents are for the most part complying with the District policy and are working at cutting their weeds. Vegetation Management Information is available at the Department's website. Fire Prevention will be coming to the Board on July 14<sup>th</sup> with the Resolution and Nuisance Declaration for approval.

### **Occupancy Inspections**

The Fire Department is continuing to conduct occupancy or Fire Safety inspections at the businesses and apartments in the community. With many businesses opening back up or increasing their capacities, it is important to complete these inspections and ensure compliance to the fire and safety codes.

### **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](http://www.cwsalerts.com)