



Annual Property Inspections Are Underway

The Kensington Fire Protection District would like to remind all property owners about upcoming annual inspections for compliance to the KFPD's Vegetation Management Standards. In 2020, there were almost 10,000 vegetation fires in the State of California, many of them close to Kensington. These incidents burned over four million acres, damaged or destroyed over 10,000 structures and accounted for 33 fatalities. This year it appears our area will remain in extreme drought conditions with only about 35% of the normal rainfall at this point.



It is the property owners' responsibility to maintain their property year-round in compliance with the KFPD's Vegetation Management Standards. The full standards can be found [here](http://www.kensingtonfire.org), or visiting the KFPD website at www.kensingtonfire.org and going to the SERVICES menu tab.

The last page of the Standards includes a Fire Hazard Reduction Checklist to assist you in ensuring your property complies. Use the Checklist to walk around your own property and assess it for compliance.

There is no need to contact us to inform us that your property is or has been brought into accordance as we make an attempt to inspect every property in the District to verify compliance with the Vegetation Management Standards.

Remember, the threat of wildland fires and potential catastrophic damage exists year around. As we move into the peak fire danger season, we ask that you please take the time to remove any fire hazard conditions you find on your property and to maintain your property free of fire dangers throughout the year. You can avoid costly fees and abatement charges if the District is forced to bring your property into compliance.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation with the District's fuel reduction program and contributing to our efforts in making Kensington a more fire safe community.

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New Fire Danger Sign Installed in Front of the Public Safety Building

Last Fall the Fire District erected a Fire Danger sign on the median strip near the PSB at 217 Arlington. Notifications of low, medium, high, and extreme fire danger are adjusted by our firefighters daily, and now viewed by many hundreds of people who travel up and down the Arlington each day, bringing additional awareness all along our hilly corridor.

Fire Surveillance Cameras Now on Vollmer Peak and Elsewhere



During Diablo Wind Events (DWEs) a wildfire in our heavily overgrown region could sweep into Kensington from Tilden Park in a matter of minutes. Two video cameras were installed last year to monitor wildfire on a 24/7 basis in Wildcat Canyon and surrounding areas. Because there is no proven automated method of detecting fire, a local group of about 40 trained Kensington volunteers take turns monitoring these cameras 24/7 during DWEs to provide an early warning to fire officials should a fire ignite. Find out more about this group and volunteer to help protect your neighbors at:

<https://wildcatwatchgroup.blogspot.com>.

The KFPD's Emergency Preparedness Committee and community volunteers are working to place additional cameras to give more complete coverage of the Canyon in time for this year's fire season.

A Guide to Kensington Emergency Numbers

Our instinct is to call 911 in case of emergency (Police or Fire). This is still the best option if you have a land line. However, it may be less efficient to call 911 from cell phones because, depending on the type of phone and your settings, your location may not be transmitted correctly, and your call may be routed to a distant agency (such as California Highway Patrol in Vallejo). It can take a while to get you rerouted, and that increases response times. The best option for cell phones in Kensington is to use the emergency numbers below. Please enter them RIGHT NOW into your phone contact lists and speed dials.

KENSINGTON EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Medical or Fire 925-933-1313

Police 510-525-7573

Fire-Safe Gardening Do's and Don'ts

Here's some tips for you or your gardener, liberally borrowed from Pacific Horticulture's excellent Fall 2012 article, Fire-Safe Favorites: Year-Round Interest from Choice Plants.

Limb up trees 10 feet above the ground, particularly if they're close to the house.

Don't over-plant. Provide generous spaces between plantings. If the landscape has become crowded over time, don't hesitate to remove plants. Remove old, dried-out, or drought-stressed plants in favor of healthy ones. Clear dead material from mature trees and shrubs. Reinvigorate shrubs and perennials with regular pruning to remove masses of dry growth. Keep soil covered with mulch, ground covers, bulbs or wildflowers to control invasive weeds. Keep weeds, litter, woodpiles and flammable materials away from the house.

Water plants close to structures to keep moisture levels high in fire season. Do this in the cool of early morning or evening so as not to lose the benefits of watering to evaporation. Choose non-flammable outdoor furniture (e.g., a wrought iron patio table in lieu of a wood one). Avoid plastics. Keep propane grills far from the house. Remove flammable non-native plants such as juniper, eucalyptus, acacia, broom and tall ornamental grasses. Replace them with natives from local sources including the Native Plant Nursery in Tilden, the Tilden Botanic Garden, and Annie's Annuals. Our local nurseries also carry large selections of native plants and can advise you on which ones to choose for fire safety.

Making Hilltop Schoolchildren Safer in Emergencies



Our EPC members have been working with the KPD and the leadership of Kensington Elementary (Hilltop) School to help devise plans for evacuating the students in an orderly and effective fashion in the event of an emergency. The Traffic Evaluation Study recommendations indicated a general problem with traffic flow and parking configurations in the neighborhood of the School, especially the neighborhoods to the southeast, which are the most congested in town. To improve traffic flow, the immovable concrete bollards on Kensington Park Road, Highland Blvd., and Windsor Ave. were replaced with removable chains. The TES study indicated that parking configurations on some of the surrounding streets should be changed to provide better traffic flow, and the KPD is working with residents and the County to try to implement these safety measures.

New Emergency Evacuation Route through Sunset View Cemetery



Last year the Board's Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC), along with Ofc. Brad Harms of the KPD, contacted the owners of the Cemetery to ask about the possibility of opening their gate at Sunset and Franciscan in case of an emergency to allow traffic to evacuate via their roads to Fairmount and Colusa. The Traffic Evaluation Study estimated that up to 30% of traffic could be relieved by passing through the Cemetery. Mr. Scott Pennington, the Cemetery president, graciously agreed, and last spring representatives from the EPC, the KFD, and the KPD installed emergency evacuation signs on the Sunset gate and two new EXIT signs inside the Cemetery to guide traffic. Our deepest thanks go to Mr. Pennington and the Cemetery owners.

We support Kensington Pathkeepers

...in their efforts to resolve the issues of ownership and maintenance of our paths.



These are of great potential importance, especially in evacuations and for firefighter access. For information go to: www.kensingtonpathkeepers.org.

How the fire board is working To Make Kensington Safer

In 2019 the Board commissioned a Traffic Evacuation Study (TES), engaging experts from UC Berkeley's Institute for Transportation Studies. They measured all the roads in town, assessed the population, vehicle loads, and possible evacuation routes. They issued a 125-page report with dozens of useful recommendations that the Board is gradually implementing in concert with our Police and Fire Departments. The report has been held up as a model to other local agencies. You can find it (including a 6-page Executive Summary) on the District website (www.kensingtonfire.org). It provides a guide to how we are working to make Kensington safer.

Safety Reminder for Summer 2021: What's in Your Plan?!?

Does your family have an emergency plan in the case of a wildfire evacuation? Does your plan include a designated family meeting location outside the danger zone? Do you have a Plan B? Plan for your pets? Does your family have a pre-packed go-bag(s)? Do you have a communication plan that includes a check-in with a relative or close friend out of the affected area (text messages may be the most reliable way to communicate)? What about your neighbors with mobility or health issues - does your neighborhood have a plan to assist them?

Have a plan and stay prepared!

Paul Moss

Public Safety Building Renovation

On April 14th, 2021, the Board of Directors approved a plan to address seismic safety, space deficiencies, and accessibility requirements of the 50+ year old Public Safety Building that are long overdue. The administrations of the KFPD and the KPPCSD are working together to make sure that the current and future needs of both the Fire Department and the Police Department are met. We have posted an extensive Fact Sheet at:

www.kensingtonfire.org/public-safety-building

to address all of your questions on the history and details of the renovation process. We will post regular updates as needed to keep you informed of these much-needed improvements to our firefighters' home!

Register for Contra Costa County Community Warning System & Local Nixle Alerts



Our Police and Fire Chiefs, and our Fire Board, ask you to take a moment to register your cell phones with the Contra Costa County Community Warning System (CWS). CWS will alert you of life-threatening incidents such as wildfire and power shutdowns, occur.

STEP ONE: Register at www.cwsalerts.com.

STEP TWO: Text your ZIPCODE to "888777" with your mobile phone and you will be registered with Kensington Police and Kensington Fire, who can provide even more local alerts.

We're Already Into The 2021 Fire Season

To learn how to improve the defensible space around your house, by hardening your buildings and managing your plants and other fuel loads, go to the Vegetation Management page of our website at:

www.kensingtonfire.org/vegetation-management.

Resources are also available at:

www.livingwithfire.com,

www.firesafemarin.org,

www.oaklandfiresafecouncil.org

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<<< SAFETY NOTICE >>>

KENSINGTON NOW HAS



ZONEHAVEN

Learn more about Kensington's new automated evacuation assistance system, and how it will help our community during an emergency.

1. **Find your zone.** Visit online: community.zonehaven.com
2. **Register for alerts.** Subscribe to: [Contra Costa Community Warning System](#), [Nixle](#), [Nextdoor](#), and follow [Kensington Fire Protection District on Facebook](#).
3. **Prepare.** Visit online: readyforwildfire.org

KENSINGTON
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Know your path to **safety.**

