

# The Fire Plug



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## President's Message

By Nina Ramsey, 2009 Board President

Welcome to the Kensington Fire Protection District's spring 2009 newsletter. The *Fire Plug* started in 2008 to inform the residents of the work of your Fire District and the services offered to keep us all safe and healthy. KFPD continues to provide the residents of Kensington with excellent fire protection and medical response services.

In 1995, when KFPD contracted with the City of El Cerrito for fire operations, that Board saved the District from potential bankruptcy and moved it onto a track of solid fiscal health. Aside from a part-time administrator, all fire personnel are City of El Cerrito employees while the engines, apparatus and equipment belong to the Fire District. KFPD also owns and maintains the Public Safety Building which houses the firefighters, their equipment and the police department. KFPD's careful fiscal management of the District has allowed the Board to start a paramedic program, make improvements to the wildland interface water systems, add 32 hydrants throughout the community, purchase state-of-the art apparatus and equipment for our first responders, and seismically strengthen and remodel the Public Safety Building. The Board has also begun prepaying the \$1.7 million retirement liability for the previous KFPD employees. KFPD is pleased to report that the District has no need to ask the Kensington residents for additional tax monies which have not been increased in nearly 30 years.

KFPD is proud to be part of your public services and we look forward to the opportunity to provide you with excellent medical and fire services. To learn more about us, please visit our website at [www.kensingtonfire.org](http://www.kensingtonfire.org).

## Getting Emergency Help When You Need It

In an emergency it is important that you know how to get help as soon as possible.

Dialing 911 is the fastest way to get help and is designed for *emergency* dispatch. When you dial 911 from a land line, the dispatcher will receive computer-aided information such as fire, medical and police jurisdictions, the telephone number making the call and the address the call is coming from.



However, when you dial 911 from a cell phone, the call is captured by the nearest cellular tower and routed to the closest CHP dispatch center. In the Kensington area, calls go to Vallejo or Oakland and your call will be answered "California Highway Patrol". The CHP dispatcher will then need to ask the location of the caller and will transfer the call to the appropriate local dispatch center. Cellular users in Kensington can program (510) 237-3233 into their cell phones for direct contact to the emergency dispatch center. This can save valuable minutes during a time of crisis. Be sure to label this number "Home 911" or some other title that will help you remember that number is for when you are in the Kensington/El Cerrito area.

Please remember that firefighter's duties will often take them out of the station. Fire crews may be responding to a dispatched emergency call, conducting inspections, participating in outreach programs, or benefitting from mandatory training to maintain certifications. Medical help is not always available at the fire station. If you experience a medical emergency while driving, please call the dispatch center directly as noted above.

## KFPD BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- *Nina Ramsey, President*
- *Helmut Blaschczyk, Vice President*
- *Leslie Michael, Secretary*
- *Don Dommer, Director*
- *Janice Kosel, Director*

## KFPD STAFF:

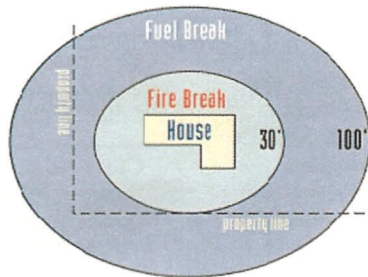
- *Lance Maples, Chief*
- *Brenda Navellier, Administrator*





## Vegetation Management Inspections

Kensington is in a "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone." Fire District Ordinance and State Law requires all home and property owners and renters to remove flammable vegetation around their residences. Protecting your home and community from the devastating effects of wildfire is the property owner's responsibility.



The Kensington Fire Protection District is requesting voluntary compliance and citizen involvement in the reduction of fire hazards for our community. Fire department personnel will check for compliance with these standards beginning in May. For the past several years, voluntary compliance by the community has been outstanding and we look forward to your cooperation once again.

The following vegetation management standards must be met by all property owners in Kensington in order to maintain the community's fire safety.

These standards are designed to reduce the threat of wildfire spreading between vegetation and structures, and from one property to another.

- *Maintain a 30-foot firebreak from structure to property line. Only well-tended properly irrigated ornamental vegetation is allowed. Remove all dead, diseased or otherwise flammable material.*
- *Trim trees 10 feet from the ground and remove dead and dying branches, loose and papery bark and fallen branches which may "ladder" fire into the canopy.*
- *Cut trees back 10 feet from chimney openings.*
- *Install a spark arrester on all chimneys.*
- *Keep roof and decks free of leaves, needles or other dead vegetation.*
- *Build or re-roof your home with minimum Class B fire resistive roofing materials.*
- *Fire resistive plants and shrubs are recommended.*
- *Place address numbers where they can be seen easily from the street to ensure quick emergency response.*
- *For areas of your property extending 30 to 100 feet from your house, reduce height of flammable vegetation (dry grass and weeds to 6 inches or less; and brush to 18 inches or less from the ground).*
- *Fire resistive plants and shrubs are recommended.*

To download a file of the District's full vegetation management guidelines, go to [www.kensingtonfire.org/safety/index.shtml](http://www.kensingtonfire.org/safety/index.shtml)

You, as the property owner, are the most important person when it comes to protecting your home from a wildfire. If you need guidance in resolving a fire hazard on your property, please call the Fire Department at (510) 215-4450 for assistance. We are happy to help!

**REMEMBER, NEVER TO PARK WITHIN  
15 FEET OF A FIRE HYDRANT**

## Successful New Pharmaceutical Program

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, KFPD held its second community pharmaceutical drop-off. The event was far more successful than anticipated. Firefighter/Paramedics collected over 75 gallons of medical waste from the community! Over three times more than our first event!

The unused and expired medications and sharps are incinerated by a licensed medical waste company. Flushing or throwing away your unwanted medications will cause them to end up in our groundwater and in the bay.

As with our first pharmaceutical drop-off last summer, the majority of participants expressed their gratitude and need for this new KFPD community program. The program was free to the Kensington community and will be held again on Saturday, **September 19<sup>th</sup>** at the Kensington Fire Station.

In the meantime, pharmaceuticals can often be returned to your pharmacy or contact Bay View Refuse at (510) 237-4614 for a permit to dispose of them at the Hazardous Waste Facility.



*A Kensington resident and neighbor dropping off unused medications to FF/Paramedic David Hood*



## Meet Your Captain/Paramedics

KFPD has three Paramedics that also serve as Captains. It takes an especially talented individual to handle this two-fold role.

As the officer of the engine company they are responsible for overall scene security, communications and coordination between responding agencies. Also, and at times most importantly, they serve as the second paramedic on the first arriving engine when the patient is so critical that two paramedics are warranted, or if there is more than one patient at the scene. At times the Captain/Paramedic is the only paramedic on the engine company. In this case, the primary function becomes patient care and the remaining responsibilities are tasked to the senior crew member. This does not relieve the Captain from those responsibilities. He must still monitor the scene to ensure a smooth transition to the transporting ambulance and ensure that interactions with family and bystanders are covered.

Meet your three Captain/Paramedics:



**Captain/Paramedic Mark Figueira** Captain/Paramedic Figueira has been with the Kensington/El Cerrito Fire Department since 1995 and played an instrumental role in the start-up of Kensington's paramedic program.

Captain Figueira has worked with the dispatch center on the fire department's electronic medical dispatch program for over 10 years and also serves as a CPR, EMT and Medi Man Instructor.

Mark and wife, Stacy, have a two-year old son.



**Captain/Paramedic Kevin Janes** Captain/Paramedic Kevin Janes joined the Kensington/El Cerrito Fire Department in 2000. Kevin came to

us with eight years paramedic experience working for a Sonoma ambulance company, and 14-years experience volunteering at the Windsor Fire District.

Captain Janes serves as the fire department's Communications Officer and also as a Communications Technician in a National Type I Incident Management Team. This is his third year working on the National Team whereby he has traveled from Idaho to southern California assisting with large-scale fires.

Kevin and wife, Roxi, have two elementary school age girls.



**Captain/Paramedic Rune Hoyer-Nielsen**

Captain/Paramedic Hoyer-Nielsen grew up locally and attended El Cerrito HS.

He has been with the department for 12 years. Rune previously worked for three years at the California Dept of Forestry (Cal Fire).

Captain Hoyer-Nielsen serves as the department's Personal Protective Equipment Coordinator, and as a department instructor for CPR, First Aid, Fire-fighter Safety and Survival, Live Burn, and Rapid Intervention Teams.

Rune and wife, Renee, have two elementary school age children that attend Kensington Hilltop school.

## CPR/First Aid Training Opportunities

If you would like to take a CPR and/or First Aid class, your Fire District is here to help. Classes are taught in very small groups and priority registration is given Kensington and El Cerrito residents. CPR begins at 9:00 a.m. There is a break from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. for lunch on your own. First Aid resumes from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m.

### Spring CPR/First Aid Schedule

April 18 El Cerrito

May 16 Kensington

Kensington classes are held at the Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Avenue. El Cerrito classes are held at Fire Station 72, 1520 Arlington Blvd. Call (510) 215-4450 to register.

Additional classes will be added in the fall.



***Engineer/Paramedic Renshaw demonstrates on a CPR mannequin.***

## Child Safety Seats

A study by the National Safe Kids Campaign showed that 85% of all children's safety seats are installed incorrectly and beyond that also found that it is the well intentioned parents or caregivers of those children that are installing the seats. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration says that the lives of 143 children in the year 2000 alone could have been saved if they were restrained properly in child



***Captain Pace installs a child seat for a resident.***

safety seats.

With all of this information, it is hard not to wonder whether or not your child's safety seat is installed correctly. Child safety seats can

be installed at the Kensington Fire Station as a free community service.

Please call (510) 215-4450 to schedule an appointment. We will make every attempt to honor our appointments but from time to time the engine company may be dispatched to a call during your installation appointment. We will do our absolute best to reschedule to accommodate your request if this happens.

## KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Kensington Public Safety Building  
217 Arlington Avenue  
Kensington, CA 94708

Phone: 510/527-8395

Fax: 510/527-8396

E-mail: [kensingtonfirepd@aol.com](mailto:kensingtonfirepd@aol.com)

*If There's a  
Doubt—  
Call Us Out!*

We're on the Web!

[www.kensingtonfire.org](http://www.kensingtonfire.org)



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## CERT—Training

*In a disaster, you may be on your own for several days without the assistance of emergency personnel...Your neighbors are learning what to do...Are you?*

The **Community Emergency Response Team** participants will learn to help themselves and their neighbors! Through this valuable training you can receive:

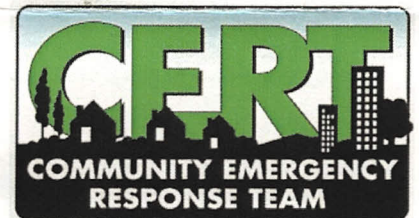
- *Disaster First Aid Training*
- *Disaster Preparedness*
- *Basic Firefighting*
- *Light Search and Rescue*
- *Damage Assessment*
- *How to Turn Off Utilities*

...and more!

The 20-hour CERT program is designed to assist residents to be self-sufficient in a disaster. Free classes are being scheduled now for various locations in the community. For more information go to [www.elcerritokeningcert.org](http://www.elcerritokeningcert.org).

**CERT Boot Camp** is designed to provide those participants who cannot dedicate the required 20 hours for training. This *non-certified* training will introduce participants to CERT in all program areas in a condensed format. Boot Camp is an eight hour class and is offered twice this year—on May 16th in El Cerrito and on October 10th in Kensington.

**CERT Certification Classes** are offered to those community members who have completed and been certified through the previous Neighborhood Emergency



Assistance Team (NEAT) program and want to be certified in CERT. This class will consist of the Terrorism and CERT Organization modules. CERT Certification Classes are two and one-half hour evening classes. Classes are being offered on April 16th and November 19th this year. For any of the CERT Training classes, please call (510) 215-4450 to register or email: [fire@ci.elcerrito.ca.us](mailto:fire@ci.elcerrito.ca.us)  
To download a copy of the Red Cross "Family Disaster Supplies Kit" brochure, please go to [www.kensingtonfire.org/cert\\_training.shtml](http://www.kensingtonfire.org/cert_training.shtml)