



# EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



10900 San Pablo Avenue ■ El Cerrito ■ CA ■ 94530  
(510) 215-4450 ■ FAX (510) 232-4917  
[www.el-cerrito.org](http://www.el-cerrito.org)

**DATE:** December 17, 2024  
**TO:** Mary Morris-Mayorga: General Manager  
**FROM:** Eric Saylor: Fire Chief  
**RE:** **Fire Chief's Report for the December 2024 Fire District Board Meeting**

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## Administration – Holiday Safety Message

The holiday season is a prime time for residential fires. December, January, and February are the months that most house fires occur. Cooking, holiday decorations, candles, and heating equipment all increase the likelihood of a fire. On average, more than one-third of home fire deaths in the United States occur during the winter months. In addition to always having working smoke alarms installed throughout your home, the following tips can help you stay safe during the holiday season.

- Always keep an eye on food being heated and be alert. If you leave the kitchen - turn off the heat!
- If a pan with grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames and turn off the burner.
- Do not place the Christmas tree where it may block exits. Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source (i.e. heaters, heater vents, and fireplaces) and try to position it near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances.
- Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Make sure to clean and inspect furnaces, fireplaces and chimneys annually before using them for the upcoming year. Make sure space heaters are approved by a national testing laboratory and have a tip-over shut-off function.
- Never burn gift wrapping paper or Christmas trees in the fireplace.
- If you need help, Dial 911! The fire department is always there for you.



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## Operations



In a very effective fire attack, Crews from **El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department** and Richmond Fire Department saved over \$4 Million in property value in El Cerrito. In less than 10 minutes, crews established fire attack, vertically vented the home, completed a primary and secondary search, and cleared the exposed structures before they ignited from radiant heat. For over 100 years, the **El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department** and Richmond Fire Department have been fighting fire together; saving lives and property on a daily basis.



One last deployment! Our Office of Emergency Services (OES) engine responded to the Mountain Fire in Ventura County. The Mountain Fire burned 192 homes and over 20,000 acres. Captain/Paramedic Hoyer-Nielsen, Captain/Paramedic Carrion, Firefighter Becker and Firefighter Driscoll helped contain the fire, clean up hotspots, and care for resident's animals. OES maintains several fire engines across the state for responses to major disasters. El Cerrito fire department is the only OES unit in the county and frequently gets calls to help other communities. OES reimburses the city of El Cerrito for its personnel and allows El Cerrito to use the fire engine if one of our fire engines is at the shop. It is a win/win relationship that gives our firefighters some amazing experience.



El Cerrito Crews helped Richmond Fire Department contain a wind driven multi-home fire on Ohio Ave.



**Protect Lives and Property**  
**Teamwork Respect Professionalism**



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Crews arrive to find a vegetation fire on long the Greenway Trail had rapidly spread into homes, fanned by 30 mph winds. The fire required 8 fire engines, two trucks, and 4 battalion chiefs to contain. In an amazing response, the crews from Richmond Fire Department and El Cerrito Fire Department contained the fire to 4 properties with no injuries.



El Cerrito Crews initiated an interior fire attack on a burning home on Overend Ave. On entry, the crew encountered clutter conditions that required an extensive search for victims. Crews always entry homes as a team, bringing hose and water to the fire while searching for victims. The fighter's clothing (turnouts) can endure temperatures of 1,300 degrees while their face mask and handle up to 500 degrees. This allows firefighters to enter super-heated environments to extinguish fires and remove victims.





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## Training



El Cerrito-Kensington Fire worked with BART to conduct an elevated rail rescue exercise. ECFD-KFPD were joined by Oakland, Berkeley and Albany Fire departments. BART trains are elevated throughout El Cerrito, offering significant challenges to rescuers. Our aerial truck at station 51 is key asset to get victims out of the trains and off the rails. Our firefighters face challenges with special rescues every day, and train daily to ensure they are effective in a wide area of problems.

## Public education and outreach



Every year, the El Cerrito Fire Department proudly participates in the Toys for Tots drive. We are accepting toys at all stations, City Hall and the community center through December 16th. Please no toy weapons or stuffed toys. The mission of the Marine Toys for Tots Program is to collect new toys and distribute those toys to economically disadvantaged children at Christmas.