



## Kensington Community Services District

DATE: May 14, 2026  
TO: Board of Directors  
FROM: David Aranda, Interim General Manager (IGM)  
SUBJECT: Approval of the Red Flag White Paper

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### RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Red Flag White Paper.

### BACKGROUND:

For many years, the district has been receiving inquiries from individuals, businesses and organizations looking for directions on what to do when the fire danger in Kensington is at an elevated level. A recent meeting with the police chief and the fire chief and the Emergency Preparedness Committee members produced information that your IGM is recommending be captured by the board for future reference regarding fire danger in Kensington.

This document is not a policy but rather a document that current staff and future staff can provide to anyone who inquiries about what to do when the fire danger is high. The document explains what a red flag day is, determines those days for Kensington and recommendations on how individuals, businesses and organizations should address those days for their personal/group decision making.

The document along with additional material will provide individuals with contact information and provide information on what the KCSD will do on red flag days.

Please note that the red flag parking restriction program is a separate agenda item but includes some of the information that will be available for individuals, businesses, and organizations.

The CERT program is a separate item. In a conversation with the fire chief, individuals are moving along with a 501©3 organization that would cover an El Cerrito-Kensington CERT. That group would be a stand-alone group that would take directions from emergency services (Fire, Police, Incident Command) to perform various tasks, as needed. The district would not be directly involved with those volunteers.

The need for more evacuation information will be addressed soon.

### EXHIBIT:

- Board Approved Recommendations for Red Flag Days in Kensington
- KCSD Police Department Proposed Red Flag Procedures



## Kensington Community Services District

### BOARD APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RED FLAG DAYS IN KENSINGTON

Introduction: The community of Kensington, California is susceptible to wildfires. The wildlands east of Kensington and the hilly, narrow streets, while quaint and beautiful, can be extremely dangerous with the right conditions.

Areas east of Highgate Rd. and Arlington Ave. have been designated moderate, high, and extremely high [Fire Hazard Severity Zones](#) by the California State Fire Marshal. In the event of a wildfire, fierce winds can carry embers for miles. Due to its location on a Wildland-Urban Interface, all of Kensington is potentially at risk in the event of a wildfire.

This document, approved by the Kensington Community Services District (KCSD) Board of Directors and created with input from the Kensington Police Chief and the El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Chief along with the Board's Emergency Preparedness Committee, is intended to assist in providing guidance when the National Weather Service declares a Red Flag Day in Kensington.

Historically, Red Flag Days are rarely proclaimed for Kensington due to the fog and moisture typically generated by its proximity to the ocean.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING RED FLAG DAYS IN KENSINGTON, CA**

**Q: What is a Red Flag Day?**

**A:** It is a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning when dry fuels, plus dangerous weather like high winds, extremely low humidity, dry thunderstorms, lightning, or dry frontal passage increase the chances for a severe fire to occur.

The National Weather Service (NWS) Weather Forecast Office issues them 18-96 hours in advance.

They are declared to give fire agencies time to staff up, reposition resources, and prepare for potential rapid-fire growth. This notice can be of benefit to all residents, businesses, and other operations involving group activities.

**Q: What is a PDS?**

**A:** PDS stands for Particularly Dangerous Situation. The National Weather Service will place this wording inside a Red Flag Warning to highlight an exceptional and especially dangerous possible fire-weather event for the benefit of first responders and the community.

**Q: What is recommended for schools, churches, organizations hosting youth activities, sports, and or public gatherings when a Red Flag Day is forecasted?**

**A:** All organizations should have a person designated to monitor weather forecasts and who understands the degrees of severity of Red Flag Days. Based on the severity of the weather forecast, the person in charge of said organization may decide to remain closed for the day or to close early. Other less drastic measures may include prohibiting smoking, open flames, and any ignition source. Additional prudent measures which can become crucial during an emergency include maintaining proper staffing levels, training staff in evacuation readiness, and ensuring all emergency exits, alarms, and PA systems are functional.

For PDS (Particular Dangerous Situation) declarations with sustained winds exceeding forty-five miles per hour it is recommended that public buildings close and activities be cancelled/suspended.

**Q: How will Kensington Fire Department, Kensington Police Department and Kensington Community Services District respond to the National Weather Service calling a Red Flag Day in Kensington?**

**A:** The Kensington Fire Department, in conjunction with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), will staff accordingly based on the risk profile.

The Kensington Police Department will increase its patrol staff from the usual two officers to three.

Q: Why are parking restrictions recommended on certain streets when the NWS calls a Red Flag Day for Kensington?

A: Parking restrictions are necessary for certain streets in the event of a Red Flag Day in Kensington to support access for first responders in case of a fire emergency. In the event of an evacuation, emergency vehicles would typically be going in the opposite direction of residents leaving the area. Parking restrictions ensure these streets are clear for emergency vehicle access and potentially for evacuation as well.

Q: How will parking restrictions be communicated and enforced?

A: The Board of Supervisors is delegating control of the streets in Kensington for red flag parking restrictions. The fire chief will note streets for red flag no parking; the police chief will oversee the enforcement of those streets on declared red flag days. Please see the attached document that outlines how the police department with their volunteers will notify residents prior to a declared red flag day and during a declared red flag day. As noted in the memo from the police chief, limitations on notifications in person may be limited so all residents are encouraged to sign up for the Nixle app.



# Red Flag Event Parking Restriction Program

## Public Notification, Staffing, and Enforcement Framework

*Kensington Community Services District – Police Department*

### 1 PURPOSE

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The purpose of this program is to enhance public safety during periods of extreme fire danger by ensuring roadway access for emergency responders, reducing traffic congestion, and supporting evacuation readiness.

This document outlines the Police Department's procedures for staffing, public notification, and enforcement during Red Flag Warning events issued by the National Weather Service.

### 2 RED FLAG EVENT DEFINITION

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A Red Flag Event is declared when the National Weather Service identifies critical fire weather conditions, typically including:

- High temperatures
- Low humidity
- Strong winds

These conditions significantly increase wildfire risk and require heightened readiness from public safety agencies.

### 3 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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Upon issuance of a Red Flag Warning affecting the District, the following actions will occur:

#### 4 1. ADVANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS (PRE-SEASON AND PRE-ORDINANCE)

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- Written notices will be distributed to residents on streets designated for potential parking restrictions.
- Notices will be delivered directly to residences to ensure awareness of the ordinance and its requirements.

## **5 2. PRE-EVENT NOTIFICATION (BEFORE RED FLAG ACTIVATION)**

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Before the start of a Red Flag Event, the District will issue targeted notifications advising residents to remove vehicles from restricted streets.

Notification methods may include:

- Nixle emergency alert system
- District website alerts and banner notifications
- Official social media channels
- Email distribution lists
- In-person outreach (staffing and volunteer availability dependent)

The goal is early voluntary compliance before enforcement begins.

## **6 3. RED FLAG EVENT ACTIVATION (DURING EVENT)**

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Final Field Notifications:

- Officers, volunteers, or authorized personnel may provide last-contact warnings to vehicle owners when feasible.

Public Messaging Continues:

- Ongoing updates may be issued through available communication platforms.
- Messaging will emphasize urgency, safety, and compliance.

## **7 4. END-OF-EVENT NOTIFICATION**

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When the Red Flag Warning expires:

- The District will notify the public that parking restrictions are lifted.
- Notifications will be disseminated through the same communication platforms used during activation.

## **8 POLICE DEPARTMENT STAFFING DURING RED FLAG EVENTS**

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- Additional officer shifts may be deployed during peak risk periods
- Overtime staffing is authorized
- Supervisors assess conditions and determine deployment levels
- Officers are assigned to:
  - High-visibility patrols
  - Traffic flow and choke point management

- Emergency access route monitoring
- Support to fire and allied agencies

## **9 ENFORCEMENT APPROACH**

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Primary Objective: Voluntary Compliance

- Residents are given multiple opportunities to comply through advance and real-time notifications.

Enforcement Actions (When Necessary):

1. Warnings (when feasible)
2. Citations
3. Vehicle Removal (Towing)

Enforcement actions will be taken when:

- Vehicles obstruct emergency access routes
- Traffic congestion creates safety hazards
- Compliance is not achieved after notification

## **10 OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES**

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- Maintain clear roadways for emergency vehicles
- Reduce traffic bottlenecks in high-risk areas
- Improve evacuation readiness
- Enhance overall community safety during wildfire conditions

## **11 CONCLUSION**

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The Red Flag Event Parking Restriction Program reflects a coordinated effort between public safety operations and community cooperation. The Police Department's approach emphasizes:

- Early and repeated notification
- Visible staffing and readiness
- Fair and progressive enforcement

Adoption of this ordinance will provide a critical tool to protect life, property, and access during periods of extreme fire danger.