



Item #10



EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

10900 San Pablo Avenue ▪ El Cerrito ▪ CA ▪ 94530
(510) 215-4450 ▪ FAX (510) 232-4917
www.el-cerrito.org

DATE: February 3, 2026

TO: David Aranda: General Manager

FROM: Eric Saylor: Fire Chief

RE: **Fire Chief's Report for the February 2026 Kensington Community Services District**



EL CERRITO-KENSINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

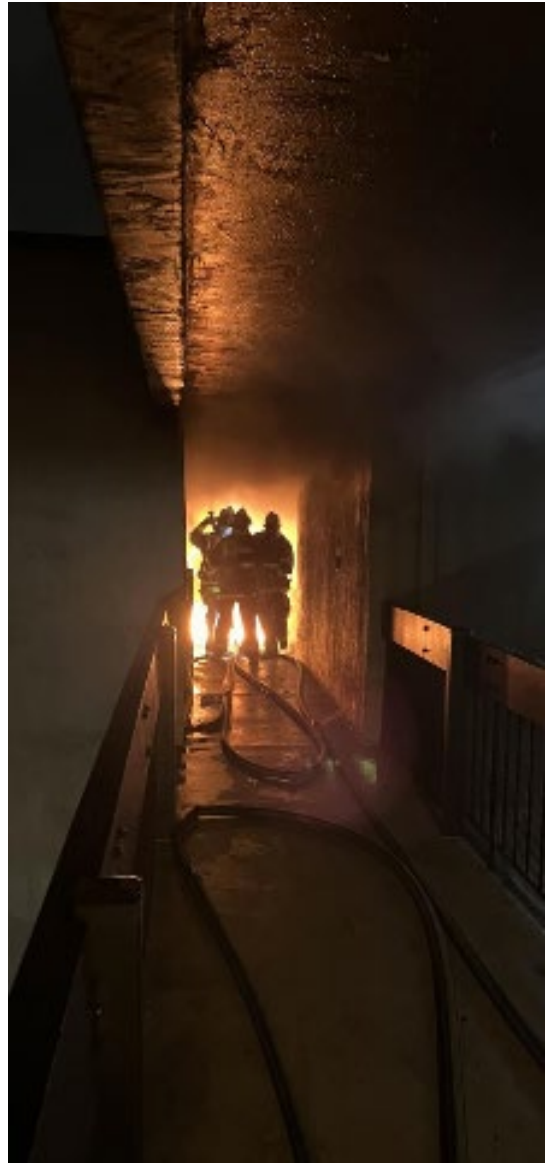


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Operations

The El Cerrito Fire Department responded to a structure fire three-story apartment building located at 525 Lexington Avenue. The fire originated in a third-floor storage closet, with preliminary findings indicating the involvement of a lithium-ion battery associated with a mobility device. Engine arrived within five minutes, immediately initiated fire attack, and assisted with evacuating residents; crews quickly confirmed all occupants were safely out of the building and contained the fire to the floor of origin. However, due to extreme heat generated by the battery fire, flames burned through multiple apartment doors and flashed into the third-floor hallway, causing damage beyond the unit of origin. Five residential units were directly impacted, with no civilian or firefighter injuries reported. Approximately 20 residents are displaced long-term due to fire damage, and an additional 50 residents are temporarily displaced pending restoration of utilities. The incident required a significant multi-agency response, and the Fire Department continues to work closely with property management and partner agencies to support displaced residents while the investigation remains ongoing.

This incident underscores the serious fire risk posed by lithium-ion batteries used in devices such as mobility aids, e-bikes, scooters, power tools, and consumer electronics. When these batteries fail, they can ignite rapidly and burn extremely hot, dramatically increasing fire spread in multi-family housing. Current research indicates that physical damage to a battery—such as impacts, drops, or shocks that damage internal components—is becoming a leading cause of thermal runaway, sometimes occurring well after the initial damage.



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Residents are urged to use only manufacturer-approved batteries and chargers, plug chargers directly into wall outlets rather than power strips, and never charge devices unattended, overnight, or in hallways, near doors, or where they block exit paths. Batteries should be stored in a cool, dry location away from heat and flammable materials, and any battery or device that has been dropped, struck, or otherwise damaged should be treated with caution and removed from service. Warning signs include swelling, unusual heat, hissing, smoke, or strong odors. If a lithium-ion battery catches fire, do not attempt to extinguish it—evacuate immediately and call 9-1-1.



Why lithium-ion battery fires are dangerous

Lithium-ion batteries can enter a condition known as **thermal runaway**, where the battery overheats uncontrollably. Once this occurs:

- Fires can **spread very quickly** and generate **extreme heat**
- Doors, walls, and nearby materials may ignite in seconds
- Fires may **re-ignite** even after appearing extinguished
- Toxic and flammable gases may be released

Because of these characteristics, lithium-ion battery fires often provide **very little time to react**.

How residents can reduce the risk

Use safe, approved products

- Purchase batteries and devices only from **reputable manufacturers**
- Use batteries and chargers that are **specifically designed for the device**





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- Avoid low-cost or aftermarket replacement batteries that are not manufacturer-approved
- Check for **product recalls or safety notices** before use

Charge safely

- Use **only the charger provided by the manufacturer**
- Plug chargers **directly into a wall outlet**—avoid power strips or extension cords
- **Do not charge batteries unattended or overnight**
- Never charge devices **in hallways, near doors, or where they block exits**
- Avoid charging in bedrooms or while sleeping

Store batteries properly

- Store devices and spare batteries in a **cool, dry location**
- Keep batteries away from **heat sources, direct sunlight, and flammable materials**
- Do not store or charge batteries in extreme temperatures
- Never crush, puncture, modify, or expose batteries to physical damage

Know the warning signs

Stop using the device immediately if you notice:

- Swelling or bulging
- Unusual heat
- Hissing, popping, or cracking sounds
- Smoke, leaking fluid, or strong odors

If a lithium-ion battery catches fire

- **Do not attempt to fight the fire**
- **Evacuate immediately and call 9-1-1**
- Warn others nearby and stay clear of the area

Proper disposal

- Do **not** place lithium-ion batteries in household trash or curbside recycling
- Use designated battery-recycling or household hazardous-waste programs



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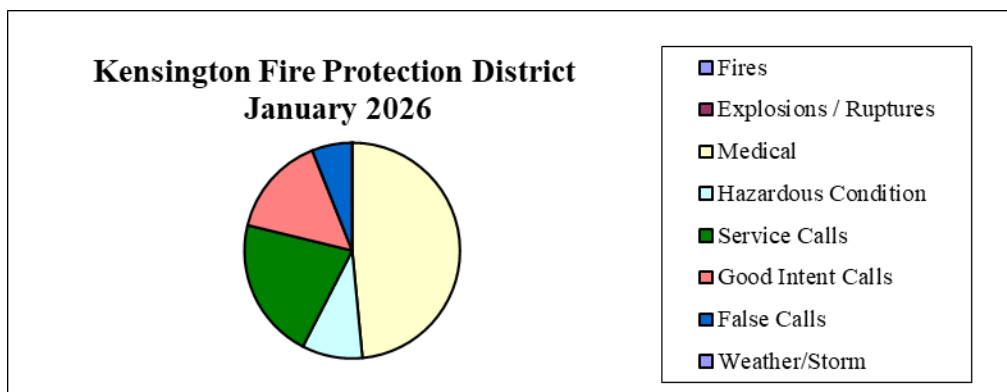
www.el-cerrito.org

DATE: February 3, 2026
TO: Kensington Fire Protection District Board Members
FROM: Jose Castrejon: Battalion Chief
RE: **Incident Activity Report for January 2026**

Thirty-three incidents occurred in the Kensington community in December, an decrease of thirteen incidents from the previous month. Please see the attached "Incident Log" for the dates and times, locations, and types of incidents the Fire Department responded to this past month. During this same time, Engine 55 responded to fifty-five calls for service, this is a decrease of eighteen incidents from the previous month.

The chart below shows the seven incident response types tracked by the State and National fire incident reporting systems. It also includes the number of responses for each type, the percentage of the total calls for each type, and all the responses in the Kensington community.

<u>Call Type</u>		<u>Incident Count</u>	<u>Percentages</u>
1: Fires	<i>(Structure, Trash, Vehicles, Vegetation Fires)</i>	0	0.00%
2: Explosions / Ruptures	<i>(Over Pressure/Ruptures, Explosions, Bombs)</i>	0	0.00%
3: Medical	<i>(EMS, Vehicle Accidents, Extrication Rescue)</i>	16	48.48%
4: Hazardous Condition	<i>(Chemical Spills, Leaks, Down Power Lines)</i>	3	9.09%
5: Service Calls	<i>(Distress, Water/Smoke/Odor Problems, Public Assists)</i>	7	21.21%
6: Good Intent Calls	<i>(Cancelled En Route, Wrong Location)</i>	5	15.15%
7: False Calls	<i>(Wrong Company/Unit Dispatched)</i>	2	6.06%
8: Weather/Storm	<i>(Storm and weather related)</i>	0	0.00%
Totals		33	100.00%



Apparatus

Incident: 26000248

Date: 01/01/2026 12:26:40

Type: 311

Street: Cambridge

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

BLS60,E155

Incident: 26000792

Date: 01/02/2026 15:54:57

Type: 321

Street: Beloit

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E152,M65

Incident: 26001148

Date: 01/03/2026 12:00:43

Type: 321

Street: Highgate

Type: Court

City: Kensington

E152

Incident: 26001202

Date: 01/03/2026 14:03:33

Type: 451

Street: Beloit

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26001226

Date: 01/03/2026 14:30:31

Type: 321

Street: Camelot

Type: Court

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26001239

Date: 01/03/2026 14:56:52

Type: 321

Street: Yale

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155,M5

Incident: 26001677

Date: 01/04/2026 15:35:18

Type: 553

Street: Highland

Type: Boulevard

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26001732

Date: 01/04/2026 17:59:41

Type: 553

Street: Kingston

Type: Road

City: Kensington

Apparatus

E155

Incident: 26002216

Date: 01/05/2026 20:29:14

Type: 553

Street: Arlington

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26002872

Date: 01/07/2026 10:36:32

Type: 651

Street: Beloit

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26003415

Date: 01/08/2026 12:51:42

Type: 321

Street: Garden

Type: Drive

City: Kensington

E155,M24

Incident: 26003488

Date: 01/08/2026 15:29:37

Type: 321

Street: Sunset

Type: Drive

City: Kensington

E155,M64

Incident: 26003740

Date: 01/09/2026 07:54:36

Type: 451

Street: Arlmont Dr / Arlington

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26003868

Date: 01/09/2026 13:14:37

Type: 321

Street: Kerr

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155,M24

Incident: 26003931

Date: 01/09/2026 15:56:27

Type: 611

Street: Oakview

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E151,E155

Incident: 26004221

Date: 01/10/2026 08:25:05

Type: 553

Street: Arlington

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155,M62

Apparatus

Incident: 26004371

Date: 01/10/2026 16:04:59

Type: 745

Street: Oakview

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E151,E164

Incident: 26004659

Date: 01/11/2026 11:28:06

Type: 553

Street: Highland

Type: Boulevard

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26005090

Date: 01/12/2026 10:07:04

Type: 611

Street: Berkeley Park

Type: Boulevard

City: Kensington

E151,E152

Incident: 26005778

Date: 01/13/2026 17:46:35

Type: 321

Street: Highgate

Type: Court

City: Kensington

E155,M27

Incident: 26006659

Date: 01/15/2026 16:32:12

Type: 611

Street: Arlington

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26007472

Date: 01/17/2026 14:15:31

Type: 611

Street: Arlington

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155,M64

Incident: 26007566

Date: 01/17/2026 18:40:54

Type: 321

Street: Beloit

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155,M69

Incident: 26008162

Date: 01/19/2026 11:38:49

Type: 321

Street: Avon

Type: Road

City: Kensington

E155,M67

Apparatus

Incident: 26008663

Date: 01/20/2026 15:57:51

Type: 451

Street: Berkeley Park

Type: Boulevard

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26008665

Date: 01/20/2026 16:00:21

Type: 321

Street: Arlington Ave / Sunset

Type: Drive

City: Kensington

E152

Incident: 26008802

Date: 01/20/2026 23:20:32

Type: 553

Street: Beloit

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26009330

Date: 01/22/2026 06:42:52

Type: 321

Street: Cowper

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

BLS60,E155

Incident: 26009381

Date: 01/22/2026 08:45:00

Type: 321

Street: Highgate

Type: Court

City: Kensington

E155,M64

Incident: 26009388

Date: 01/22/2026 09:09:46

Type: 323

Street: Arlington

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155,M67

Incident: 26010061

Date: 01/23/2026 17:06:14

Type: 740

Street: Arlington

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155

Incident: 26010304

Date: 01/24/2026 09:33:03

Type: 321

Street: Trinity

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155,M64

Incident: 26010694

Apparatus

Date: 01/25/2026 07:51:02

Type: 321

Street: Santa Fe Ave / Colusa

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

BLS60,E155,M65

Incident: 26012664

Date: 01/29/2026 17:23:13

Type: 553

Street: Arlington

Type: Avenue

City: Kensington

E155

Report Criteria

Basic Incident Date Original (Fd1.3): Is Equal To Last Month

City: Is Equal To Kensington

Apparatus: Has One Or More Which Begins With E

Incident	Date	Type	Street	Type	City	Apparatus
26000049	01/01/2026 01:51:12	321	Central	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155,M73
26000141	01/01/2026 08:56:13	321	Ramona	Avenue	El Cerrito	BLS61,E155
26000248	01/01/2026 12:26:40	311	Cambridge	Avenue	Kensington	BLS60,E155
26001202	01/03/2026 14:03:33	451	Beloit	Avenue	Kensington	E155
26001226	01/03/2026 14:30:31	321	Camelot	Court	Kensington	E155
26001239	01/03/2026 14:56:52	321	Yale	Avenue	Kensington	E155,M5
26001626	01/04/2026 13:22:27	451	Colusa	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155
26001655	01/04/2026 14:30:22	611	Stockton	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155
26001677	01/04/2026 15:35:18	553	Highland	Boulevard	Kensington	E155
26001732	01/04/2026 17:59:41	553	Kingston	Road	Kensington	E155
26002216	01/05/2026 20:29:14	553	Arlington	Avenue	Kensington	E155
26002371	01/06/2026 09:11:55	5000	Park	Vista	El Cerrito	E155,M64
26002474	01/06/2026 12:46:01	321	Ramona	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155,M62
26002601	01/06/2026 17:16:51	5000	Terrace	Drive	El Cerrito	E155,M68
26002718	01/06/2026 22:28:30	611	Village	Drive	El Cerrito	E155,M69,M77
26002872	01/07/2026 10:36:32	651	Beloit	Avenue	Kensington	E155
26003415	01/08/2026 12:51:42	321	Garden	Drive	Kensington	E155,M24
26003488	01/08/2026 15:29:37	321	Sunset	Drive	Kensington	E155,M64
26003740	01/09/2026 07:54:36	451	Arlmont Dr / Arlington	Avenue	Kensington	E155
26003868	01/09/2026 13:14:37	321	Kerr	Avenue	Kensington	E155,M24
26003931	01/09/2026 15:56:27	611	Oakview	Avenue	Kensington	E151,E155
26004221	01/10/2026 08:25:05	553	Arlington	Avenue	Kensington	E155,M62
26004296	01/10/2026 12:01:55	611	San Pablo	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155,M27
26004369	01/10/2026 15:59:36	451	Terrace	Drive	El Cerrito	E155
26004659	01/11/2026 11:28:06	553	Highland	Boulevard	Kensington	E155
26004919	01/11/2026 21:42:00	321	Pomona	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155
26005448	01/13/2026 01:30:48	611	Carmel	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155,M71
26005559	01/13/2026 09:26:45	323	I 80		Richmond	E155,E166,M64
26005778	01/13/2026 17:46:35	321	Highgate	Court	Kensington	E155,M27
26006073	01/14/2026 11:24:59	451	Schmidt	Lane	El Cerrito	E155
26006197	01/14/2026 15:43:09	321	Errol	Drive	El Cerrito	BLS04,E155,M68
26006414	01/15/2026 05:36:06	451	Ramona	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155
26006659	01/15/2026 16:32:12	611	Arlington	Avenue	Kensington	E155
26006971	01/16/2026 10:43:52	444	Shevlin	Drive	El Cerrito	E155
26007472	01/17/2026 14:15:31	611	Arlington	Avenue	Kensington	E155,M64
26007566	01/17/2026 18:40:54	321	Beloit	Avenue	Kensington	E155,M69
26007782	01/18/2026 12:32:52	451	Colusa	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155
26007825	01/18/2026 14:31:51	311	San Carlos	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155,M61
26007862	01/18/2026 16:09:34	611	Wildcat Canyon	Road	**UNDEFINED	E155
26008162	01/19/2026 11:38:49	321	Avon	Road	Kensington	E155,M67
26008334	01/19/2026 20:00:03	321	Carmel	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155,M77
26008350	01/19/2026 20:40:36	321	San Carlos	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155,M69
26008663	01/20/2026 15:57:51	451	Berkeley Park	Boulevard	Kensington	E155
26008802	01/20/2026 23:20:32	553	Beloit	Avenue	Kensington	E155
26009124	01/21/2026 17:24:24	321	Park	Way	El Cerrito	E155,M68
26009271	01/22/2026 01:59:26	553	Ramona	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155
26009330	01/22/2026 06:42:52	321	Cowper	Avenue	Kensington	BLS60,E155
26009381	01/22/2026 08:45:00	321	Highgate	Court	Kensington	E155,M64
26009388	01/22/2026 09:09:46	323	Arlington	Avenue	Kensington	E155,M67
26010061	01/23/2026 17:06:14	740	Arlington	Avenue	Kensington	E155
26010304	01/24/2026 09:33:03	321	Trinity	Avenue	Kensington	E155,M64
26010694	01/25/2026 07:51:02	321	Santa Fe Ave / Colusa	Avenue	Kensington	BLS60,E155,M65
26011408	01/26/2026 22:31:30	321	Balra	Drive	El Cerrito	BLS81,E155
26012127	01/28/2026 12:59:15	321	Carmel	Avenue	El Cerrito	E155,M69

Incident	Date	Type	Street	Type	City	Apparatus
26012664	01/29/2026 17:23:13	553	Arlington	Avenue	Kensington	E155
Count: 55						

Report Criteria

Basic Incident Date Original (Fd1.3): Is Equal To Last Month

Basic Primary Station Name (Fd1.4): Contains 55