Item #25

Kensington Emergency Preparedness Report

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Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

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November Overview

This month's work shifted Kensington's all-hazards focus toward the rainy season while continuing wildfire-preparedness momentum. Key developments included rainy-season and atmospheric-river readiness messaging, sandbag availability for Kensington residents, Kensington-wide Firewise renewal data collection, the start of CERT Basic Training, and the CERT Flood Club tabletop session.

Rainy Season and El Niño Preparedness

Seasonal Outlook

For Kensington, a wetter winter can bring localized street flooding, clogged storm drains, saturated hillsides, downed trees, and power outages. Many of the same household steps used for wildfire readiness, such as supply kits, alert sign-ups, and neighbor-to-neighbor communication, apply directly to winter storms.

Get Ready for Atmospheric Rivers

Now is the time to start preparing for winter storms. One of the simplest things residents can do is keep storm drains clear by cleaning up their own property before the rain starts.

Leaves, pine needles, and other debris build up on roofs and in gutters through the fall. If gutters and downspouts are blocked, rainwater can overflow and run toward foundations, walkways, and neighboring properties. Clear them out now so water can drain the way it should.





Loose leaves, branches, yard waste, and other debris can wash into the street during heavy rain and block storm drains. Rake, bag, and properly dispose of yard debris, and secure anything that could get washed away. Every property that's cleared out helps the whole neighborhood's drainage work better.

Sandbags Available for Kensington Residents



Sandbags are available to Kensington residents at the top of Kensington Park Road. If your home is in a low spot, sits on a slope, or has had water problems before, pick up sandbags early, before a storm is in the forecast.

Atmospheric rivers can show up quickly, and the best time to prepare is before the first big storm. A few hours of work now can help protect your home, your street, and your neighbors all winter long.

Firewise Renewals and Data Collection

Each of Kensington's 22 Firewise communities received its own survey to document 2026 home-hardening and defensible-space work. Firewise leads forwarded the surveys to residents, with a target response deadline of October 31 at 12:00 p.m. Late responses are still being accepted. Collecting data by community lets participation be tracked locally while the results are combined into a single Kensington-wide total.

Across the latest submitted spreadsheets, residents have reported:

198	$3,737,507	46,532	10,536
survey responses	invested in contractor, home-hardening, and landscaping/DIY work	hours of mitigation and preparedness activity	green-waste bin loads (plus 1,218 lawn-and-leaf bags)

These figures are self-reported totals from survey responses received to date. They do not capture all work completed throughout Kensington, and they do not indicate that renewal approvals are complete. Totals combine the 17 latest submitted spreadsheets, with earlier versions excluded to avoid double counting. Green-waste bins and lawn-and-leaf bags are reported separately because they are different units.

This data will support Firewise renewal applications, which are due in mid-November. It also gives Kensington measurable evidence of resident engagement, which strengthens future grant applications. A one-page case study tracing Kensington Firewise's growth from a single recognized community in 2023 to 22 in 2026 was also prepared for the Kensington Property Owners Association annual meeting. A fuller publication of the 2026 results is planned for early 2027.

CERT Program Updates

CERT Basic Training

El Cerrito-Kensington CERT Basic Training began Friday, October 9, with Unit 1: Intro to CERT at the Kensington Community Center (59 Arlington Ave), taught by Captain Crumpacker. Training information and future sessions are posted at ECKCERT.org.

Flood Club: Preparing for El Niño



On Wednesday, October 28, El Cerrito/Kensington CERT hosted Flood Club, a 7–9 p.m. tabletop session at Hana Gardens in El Cerrito, to help residents prepare for the rainy season and the anticipated high volume of precipitation. The Flood Club curriculum was developed by the Berkeley Disaster Preparedness Neighborhood Network and shared by CERT Richmond, which hosted its own "Super El Niño: Flood Club" in August. The EC/K session was tailored for El Cerrito and Kensington residents.

The session explained why this winter matters: a historic El Niño can fuel frequent, severe atmospheric rivers, raising the risk of localized flash flooding, long power outages, fallen trees, mudslides, and saturated soils. Its central message was that flood readiness starts at home and is strongest when neighbors prepare together.

Key takeaways

- **Use more than one alert channel:** Register with the County Community Warning System, know your evacuation zone, and keep a battery or hand-crank radio for when power or cell service is out.
- **Know your neighbors and what they have:** Use a Skills and Equipment Inventory to note who has a generator, medical training, a truck, or tools.
- **Plan how your block will communicate:** Don't assume everyone gets the same alert. An email list or WhatsApp group is a good start, backed by a PACE plan (Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency).
- **Know who may need extra help:** Older adults, people with limited mobility, young children, people who live alone, and people with limited English.
- **Adopt a drain:** Organize neighbors to identify and regularly clear the storm drains on their street, especially before and during big storms.
- **Plan for sanitation:** A simple two-bucket emergency toilet can help when water service is out or toilets can't be used.

Flood Club Resource Guide. Everything covered at the session, including checklists in English and Spanish, is posted at eckcert.org/flood-club-guide

START HERE

Six things to do this week

1. **Sign up for alerts.** Register with the County Community Warning System and El Cerrito Police Nixle.
2. **Make a household plan.** Contact list, meeting spots, and more than one way out.
3. **Pack a go bag and a stay box.** One for leaving fast, one for staying put without power or water.
4. **Get sandbags early.** Up to 10 free per household at the El Cerrito Recycling Center, 7501 Schmidt Lane.
5. **Bag your papers.** Seal important documents in plastic and store them up high.
6. **Meet your neighbors.** Share skills and tools, agree how you'll communicate, and adopt a storm drain.

What flood alerts mean

READY
Outlook
Risk of a weather hazard in the next 7 days. Make a plan of action.

SET · BE PREPARED
Flood Watch
Conditions look favorable for flooding. Have your plan ready.

GO · BE AWARE
Flood Advisory
A nuisance or significant inconvenience is possible. Use caution.

GO · ACT!
Flood Warning
Flooding is happening or about to. Move to higher ground immediately.

Alert levels adapted from National Weather Service guidance.

6 inches of moving water can knock a person down.
1 foot of moving water can sweep a car away.