

Helpful mitigation tips to keep wildfires at bay



Photo courtesy MOFD

This vegetation fire in Sanders Ranch on Oct. 11, 2020 was ignited by a resident mowing tall grass.

By Jennifer Wake

While lightening strikes were to blame for several recent California wildfires, the majority of fires are sparked from a human source, according to the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. On Aug. 9 ConFire announced two arson arrests and 14 fireworks-related citations by

its Fire Investigation Unit investigators in the month of July. Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda police officers also issued five fireworks citations between July 11 and July 24.

But fireworks aside, even the simple act of mowing grass, if not done properly, can lead to disaster.

A one-alarm grass fire on Oct. 11, 2020 in Moraga's

Sanders Ranch area that required four fire agencies to extinguish was caused by a resident who was mowing tall grass behind a house. The fire burned 30 acres and took two hours to contain. At the time of the blaze, Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Dave Winnacker said that during his time with the district three of the four significant vegetation

fires had been caused by residents carrying out late season fuel mitigation work.

Due to the extreme drought conditions, vegetation is at a critical level of dryness and local fire districts urge residents to be cognizant of potential hazards involved in fuel mitigation. The California Wildland Fire Coordinating Group advises not to use lawn mowers on weeds or dry grass, reminding folks that metal blades striking rocks can start a fire, and to mow before 10 a.m. (but not when it's windy or excessively dry). The CWFCG also says to keep a shovel, fire extinguisher, and

cell phone handy in case problems arise and to avoid driving cars on dry grass, since hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can be a source of ignition.

ConFire's FIU urges residents to help them fight the crime of arson across the county by calling the Arson Tip line at 1-866-50-ARSON. Tips can be anonymous, but all tips are treated confidentially. Fire investigators sometimes need additional information, so inclusion of name and phone number is encouraged. For other fire safety tips, visit www.cccfpd.org or www.mofd.org

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, Aug. 18, 6 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors
Regular Meeting: Tuesday, Sept. 14, 1 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



Back to school with joy ... and COVID-19 guidelines



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Principal Brian Sullivan has resumed his practice of greeting students and parents daily during drop off and pickup at Donald Rheem Elementary School in Moraga.

By Sora O'Doherty

Two of Lamorinda's three municipalities started the new school year with new superintendents, but everyone was well prepared for the

challenges of keeping students safe while the COVID-19 pandemic lingers. All staff, teachers, and volunteers at area schools will be required to be vaccinated, a task that doesn't present much of a

challenge with local vaccination rates hovering around 90%. With few exceptions, everyone on campus will be required to be masked when indoors. For those who, for health reasons, cannot be masked, alternatives include face shields with a drape affixed to the bottom edge.

Julie Parks, former principal of Orinda's Miramonte high school, now superintendent of the Moraga School District, posted a 20-minute video to YouTube, explaining the complex and sometimes confusing requirements for home health checks, hygiene and sanitation, daily classroom cleaning, masking, testing, and quarantining, along with updated information on ventilation and air quality. She explained how requirements are filtered down from the national level, where the Center for Disease Control makes recommendations, that are adapted for California by the California Department of Health, from which the Contra Costa County health services come up with local policies for implementation.

There will be quarantine requirements for persons exposed to active COVID-19 infected individuals, and those requirements vary with vaccination and mask status. On the bad news side of the balance, there will be no field trips from Moraga schools for the foreseeable future, but on

the positive side, the school hot lunch program will continue. More good news is that when students are masked, social distancing is not required.

Families will be expected to perform home health checks daily, and to keep students home from school if ill, but they will no longer be required to submit verifications. Teachers will continue to provide schoolwork for students who must stay home because of illness or exposure, but will also offer support upon the child's return to school. COVID-19 testing will be offered throughout the local school districts, so that everyday testing will be available, if not at a child's school, at a school not too far away.

All of the schools in the districts have updated HVAC systems that provide filtered air. If air quality is poor, the classrooms can be closed to rely on the improved air quality indoors, but if the air quality is good, opening classrooms to fresh air will be encouraged. Classrooms will be cleaned daily. Additional cleaning supplies will be available in classrooms, and students will be encouraged to wash their hands often, with sanitation stations remaining on campus in addition to well-supplied bathrooms. In the event of a case of COVID at school, the affected classroom will be

cleaned and disinfected. In addition, in the event of a case at school, contact tracing will be effected.

By late Friday afternoon, Aug. 13, messages started appearing on social media with parents complaining about "very vague" notices from the Orinda Union School District regarding positive cases within the OUSD school community. Another parent said they received notification from the Acalanes Union School District.

Contacted by The Lamorinda Weekly, new OUSD superintendent Aida Glimme responded to the parents' concerns on Saturday, Aug. 14. She explained that the district is following the same communication protocols given to them by the county, required by the California Department of Public Health.

Glimme said that OUSD would start a COVID-19 dashboard this week. She discussed how the district is trying to navigate a very difficult situation, striving to protect students from being ostracized while at the same time providing as much information as possible to those who may have immunocompromised family members. She herself is a parent in exactly that situation.

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Public Safety

Emergency response:
Emergency: 24 Hours 911
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours 925-284-5010
Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or go to www.nixle.com
Lafayette Police Department:
3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd. 925-283-3680
Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt 925-299-3221
Police Department Tip Line 94549Tip@gmail.com
Police Department Traffic Issues 94549Traffic@gmail.com
Moraga Police Department:
329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055
Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049
Orinda Police Department:
22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820
Chief of Police, David M. Cook 925-254-6820
Orindatip@cityoforinda.org
Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report July 25 - Aug. 7

Alarms	44
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	14
Traffic	64
Suspicious Circumstances	5
Suspicious Subject	14
Suspicious Vehicle	14
Service to Citizen	25
Patrol Req./Security Check	68
Public/School Assembly Check	0
Supplemental Report	22
Vacation House Check	41
Welfare Check	17
Ordinance Violation	3

Vehicle violations
Hit And Run Misdemeanor 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 1100 Block Sierra Vista Way
Reckless Driving Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3400 Block Hamlin Rd.
Tc - Property Damage

Herman Dr./Moraga Rd. 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
1000 Block Brown Ave. Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd. 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3600 Block Happy Valley Rd.
Vehicle Theft 1000 Block 2Nd St.
Other criminal activity
Computer Fraud 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Fraud Credit Card 4000 Block Canyon Rd.
Fraud False Pretenses Police Department
Grand Theft 3400 Block Monroe Ave. Grand Theft Veh Parts 3200 Block Rohrer Dr.
Identity Theft Police Department 3600 Block Cerrito Ct. (2) 600 Block Doreen Way (2)
Panhandling 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Petty Theft 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 10 Block Brookdale Ct. 900 Block Carol Ln. 3500 Block Terrace Way 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Shoplift 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2) 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Nuisance to the Community
Disturbance-domestic 3700 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3200 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Drunk In Public 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Loud Music 500 Block McBride Dr. 3300 Block N Lucille Ln.
Loud Noise 400 Block Florence Dr. 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Los Palos Mnr/Glenside Dr.
Loud Party 3500 Block Boyer Cir. 3300 Block Walnut Ln. 700 Block Solana Dr.
Public Nuisance 1000 Block Dewing Ave. (2) 1000 Block Windsor Dr. Brown Ave./Deer Hill Rd.

500 Block St. Mary's Rd. 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Vandalism Police Department 50 Block Lafayette Cir.
Other
Animal Cruelty 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3200 Block Old Tunnel Rd.
Fire/Ems Response Info Pleasant Hill Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd. Reliez Valley Rd./La Caminita Springhill Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd. 1000 Block Stuart St. 1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd. 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. Hester Ln./Happy Valley Rd.
H&S Violation 1St St./Golden Gate Way
Harassment 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Threats 900 Block Hough Ave.
Unwanted Guest 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Violation Custody Order 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd. 1200 Block Warner Ct. (2) 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report July 27 - Aug. 9

Alarms	9
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	2
Traffic	26
Suspicious Circumstances	1
Suspicious Subject	1
Suspicious Vehicle	6
Service to Citizen	14
Patrol Req./Security Check	10
Supplemental Report	8
Vacation House Check	9
Welfare Check	3
Public/School Assembly Check	3
Ordinance Violation	0

Vehicle violations
Dui Misd Olyptic Blvd. Excessive Speed Miramonte Dr.

Moraga Way/El Camino Moraga Moraga Way/Coral Dr. (2) Moraga Way/School St Moraga Way/Ivy Dr. (2)
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Rheem Blvd./Moraga Rd.
Reckless Driving Moraga Rd./St. Marys Rd. Moraga Way/School St.
Other criminal activity
Corporal Injury/Spouse 20 Block Sullivan Dr.
Forgery 1100 Block Moraga Way
Fraud False Pretenses 100 Block Draeger Dr.
Grand Theft 400 Block Woodminster Dr.
Petty Theft 1300 Block Rimer Dr. 100 Block Calle La Montana 3900 Block Paseo Grande Safeway Homegoods Not Available
Shoplift Cvs
Nuisance to the Community
Disturbance-domestic 1800 Block Joseph Dr. (2)
Disturbing The Peace Rimer Dr/Oxford Dr. 1900 Block Ascot Dr.
Loud Music 10 Block El Camino Flores 300 Block Rheem Blvd. Hacienda (2) Canyon Club Brewery 100 Block Ascot Ct.
Loud Noise Hacienda Not Available
Loud Party 500 Block Augusta Dr. El Camino Flores/Baitx Dr.
Public Nuisance Country Club Dr./Canyon Rd.
Vandalism Rancho Laguna Park 2000 Block Ascot Dr. Rheem Blvd./Moraga Rd.
Other
Fireworks 60 Block Wandel Dr. Mentally Ill Commit Not Available



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report July 25 - July 31

Alarms	22
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	3
Traffic	8
Suspicious Circumstances	4
Suspicious Subject	4
Suspicious Vehicle	2
Service to Citizen	28
Patrol Req./Security Check	29
Supplemental Report	4
Vacation House Check	0
Welfare Check	2
Public/School Assembly Check	1
Ordinance Violation	2

Vehicle violations
Accident Injury Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante
Reckless Driving El Toyonal/Camino Pablo Tc - Property Damage Orinda Way/Camino Pablo

Other criminal activity
Embezzlement Camino Sobrante
Panhandling Camino Sobrante (2)
Petty Theft 70 Block El Gavilan Rd. 10 Block Ramona Dr.
Petty Theft From Veh 300 Block El Toyonal
Warrant Arrest Wilder Blvd./Gateway Blvd..

Nuisance to the Community
Loud Party 10 Block Heather Ln. (2)
Other
Barking Dog 100 Block Leslee Ln.
Fire/Ems Response Info Eb Sr 24 At Camino Pablo
Terrorist Threats 10 Block Sycamore Rd.