

Holiday safety tips from fire and police departments

By Vera Kochan

Winter holidays are a time for family gatherings, colorful decorations, warm fireplaces, gift-giving, ski vacations and cocktails. It's also the time of year when local fire districts and police departments want residents to be especially mindful of safety risks and seasonal hazards that could

turn an otherwise celebratory time of year into a tragedy.

According to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District website, folks should be wary when using candles during the holidays as more than half of home decoration fires in December are started by candles with Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day being the three top days

for usage. Never place candles near anything that will burn, extinguish candles before leaving a room, and never leave children alone with lit candles. A safe alternative is to use flameless candles.

Christmas trees are a major part of the holidays, but MOFD warns against placing them in areas that block hallways, exit ways or doors. Also, make sure not to place them near heating ducts, fireplaces, candles, lanterns or heaters. Christmas trees are attributed in causing 1 in every 4 winter fires. The tree's water level should be checked daily to avoid over-drying, and once the tree has dried, remove it from the home.

A glowing fireplace is a cozy feature of the holidays, but always make certain that any decorations and flammable materials are nowhere near it. Once the presents are opened, the house is littered with wrapping paper, boxes and other trash. MOFD advises residents not to burn these in a fireplace. Ink from the paper can give off toxic fumes, and when burning papers float up the chimney they can ignite creosote deposits in the flue.

Colored lights are a popular part of the holiday season. Keep yourself safe while climbing a ladder by making sure it is centered and you are able to reach your goal without falling off. Before even hanging the lights, look for frayed wires, damaged bulb sockets and worn insulation. It's equally important not to overload an outlet with too many lights. Make certain to use outdoor rated extension cords outside. Plug them into a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupting (GFCI) outlet.

An Advisory Message from local police departments includes tips for a safe season by warning holiday shoppers



bigstockimages

to be mindful of their surroundings. Criminals may hang around ATMs and banks to spot folks who have withdrawn large amounts of cash. If you suspect that you are being targeted, lock your doors and windows, call 9-1-1, flag down an officer, or drive to the nearest police department.

Also, never leave a purse or bag on the seat of your car in plain sight. You are just making a thief's Christmas shopping easier and less expensive for him/her. Lock your car when you leave it, and stash valuables in the trunk (this includes unvaluables such as gym bags – they don't know it's just your smelly workout clothes until they've broken your car's window).

If you go away for the holidays, either for an extended vacation or just the weekend, make sure to lock your house (doors and windows), set an alarm, hide valuables (jewelry), and use timers on your lights set to various hours for the appearance of someone being home. Ask a neighbor to keep an eye on your house, and never "broadcast" in public or on social media when and how long you will be gone. Just as-

sume that the walls have ears.

Local police warn people to be aware of scams either through phone calls or emails. Reputable institutions such as Pacific Gas & Electric will never call to say a bill is past due. No legitimate company or agency accepts payment over the phone via gift card or Green Dot card. When receiving an email from someone you don't know, or even a company that you have done legitimate business with, asking for a payment that you are suspicious of, never open any attachments or click onto any links. Instead, find a phone number to these businesses that was not included in the email, and call to verify the problem (if there was one).

The area has been experiencing some much needed rainfall, and the Moraga Police Department reminds drivers to slow down, don't get distracted, and drive defensively. Holiday celebrating often involves alcohol. If you are going to revel with spirits other than those of Christmas Past, Present, and Future, make sure to have a designated driver in your group or call a ride service. "Do not drive under the influence ...even if you're just feeling buzzed."



Surprisingly great rates that fit any budget.

Kelly Sopak Insurance Agency
 Kelly Sopak, Agent
 Insurance Lic#: 6006124
 1 Northwood Drive Suite 1
 Orinda, CA 94563
 Mon-Thurs 9:00am to 5:00pm
 Fridays 9:00am to 4:30pm
 Evenings & Weekends by Appt

I can help you bundle your home and auto insurance, at a rate that may surprise you. Call me for a quote today.

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.™

Individual premiums and budgets will vary by customer. All applicants subject to State Farm underwriting requirements. Availability and amount of discounts and savings vary by state.





Bay Area Drainage, Inc.

Have You Checked Your Crawlspace Lately?

- French Drains
- Underfloor Drains
- Downspout Systems
- Subdrain Systems
- Sump Pumps
- Retaining Walls
- Pavestone Driveway & Walkways

A General Engineering Contractor
 Locally owned and Operated
 Contractor LIC # 762208

925•377•9209



visit our website
www.bayareadrainage.com

Letters to the editor

Chevron mini mart

We do not need a 24-hour mini mart at a gas station that is located on a critical watershed area and also an easy freeway on-ramp for quick getaways for robberies. Already, the Wilder off and on ramp has been a scene of several nefarious and unwanted crime scenes tying up the freeway lanes for hours in either direction due to police activity.

Chevron, with its billions of dollars in profit should be providing electric car charging stations anyway, without any additional building or need for a 'picnic area' with a convenient dumping site into the creek area.

This is not a new business that would benefit existing Orinda residents. This is not 'enhanced Creek access' that would benefit a walkable downtown' either.

Nobody attending a class or event in the Orinda Community center is going to stop by the Chevron mini mart for an overheated hot dog or a syrupy soft drink in a non-sustainable

plastic cup for refreshment.

This is a recipe for disaster to further pollute the creek shed with unwanted garbage and food refuse. The 'observation deck' overlooks the creek and is an easy target for windswept or otherwise unattended refuse to make its way into the environment. Approval from California Fish and Wildlife should not be approved and may not have even been notified at this point.

There are plenty of places to get better food within minutes of walking.

I am firmly opposed to this project. This is a superfluous and unnecessary project created by the same gas company that has been price gouging you as a consumer for the last year at least in a more obvious way. Do you really want to give Chevron more money to sell overpriced snacks and pollute the environment with more 'to go' waste?

I think not.

Cathleen Daffer
Orinda

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence – we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate. Lamorinda Weekly reserves the right to refuse publishing a letter submission. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, 1480 Moraga Road STE C #202, Moraga, CA 94556

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, Ryan Sullivan
 925-254-6820

Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police

Department

Incident

Summary

Report

Nov. 27 - Dec. 10



Alarms 43
 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 23
 Traffic 64
 Suspicious Circumstances 8
 Suspicious Subject 14
 Suspicious Vehicle 18
 Service to Citizen 27
 Patrol Req./Security Check 22
 Public/School Assembly Check 5
 Supplemental Report 24
 Vacation House Check 24
 Welfare Check 19
 Ordinance Violation 0

Vehicle violations

Auto Burglary 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Hit And Run Misdemeanor 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Deer Hill Rd./Laurel Dr. 3400 Block Moraga Blvd.
 4000 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 900 Block Village Center
 3500 Block Brook St.
 Reckless Driving
 Reliez Station Rd./Glenside Dr.
 Reliez Valley Rd./Withers Ave.
 Pleasant Hill Rd./Springhill Rd.
 St Marys Rd./Moraga Rd.
 Moraga Rd./Nephi Ct.
 Pleasant Hill Rd./Springhill Rd.
 Acalanes Rd./Hidden Valley Rd.
 Happy Valley Rd./Crestmont Dr.
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Stolen Vehicle Recovery
 Deer Hill Rd./Oak Hill Rd.

Mt. Diablo Blvd./1st St.
 Tc - Fire And Amb Enroute
 Pleasant Hill Rd./Wb Sr 24
 Tc - Minor Injuries
 10 Block Crest Rd.
 Tc - Property Damage
 Moraga Rd./Oliver Ct.
 Mt. Diablo Blvd./Golden Gate Way
 Deer Hill Rd./1st St.
 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Pleasant Hill Rd./Rancho View Dr.
 Vehicle Theft
 900 Block Dewing Ave.
 4000 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 4100 Block Hidden Valley Rd. (2)
 900 Block Acalanes Rd.

Other criminal activity

Embezzlement
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Grand Theft From Veh
 1100 Block Glen Rd.
 Grand Theft Veh Parts
 900 Block Hawthorn Dr.
 1200 Block Quandt Rd.
 1100 Block Perales St.
 Panhandling
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Petty Theft
 Police Department
 1000 Block Oak Hill Rd.
 3400 Block Silver Springs Ct.
 800 Block Solana Dr.
 3200 Block Park Ln.
 Petty Theft From Veh
 900 Block S Thompson Rd.

3100 Block Old Tunnel Rd.
 Petty Theft Veh Parts
 Oak Hill Rd./Deer Hill Rd.
 Robbery
 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Shoplift
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Warrant Service
 800 Block Ava Ct.
 Nuisance to the Community
 Disturbance-domestic
 4000 Block Marianne Dr.
 900 Block East St.
 1100 Block Sunset Lp.
 Disturbing The Peace
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Loud Noise
 Crestmont Dr./Happy Valley Rd.
 1st St./Golden Gate Way
 Loud Party
 3100 Block Camino Colorados
 Public Nuisance
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
 Meek Pl./Sunset Lp.
 Vandalism
 3200 Block Stanley Blvd.
 3300 Block Victoria Ave.
 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Golden Gate Way/2Nd St.

In Custody Theft
 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Loitering
 3200 Block Mt. Diablo Ct.
 Threats
 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 3500 Block Brook St.
 3500 Block Plaza Way
 Trespass
 3600 Block Deerhill Rd.
 Unwanted Guest 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 Violation Custody Order
 1000 Block 2Nd St. (2)

Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report will be back