State plans new rules to cut fire risk
South Lake Tahoe already banning combustible materials in 5-foot zone around homes
By Julie Johnson
State fire officials are writing new rules that could bar most plants, mulch and other combustible materials within 5 feet of homes in the five fire-prone areas of California.

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Pier 39 bustling amid slowdown on wharf
By Mario Cortez
Last Saturday, inside a restaurant on Pier 39, owner Peter Cooperstein of Amici's East Coast Pizzeria location above an official at the state agency overseeing the board. By Lisa Lien-Mager, Aiyuk formally asks 49ers to tone down on social issues

By Catherine Ho
In what could be a glimpse of how in San Francisco's intractable fentanyl crisis, the number of people who died from accidental drug overdoses fell in June to 48—the lowest monthly number in nearly two years, according to preliminary figures released Monday from the San Francisco Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

The last time the death count dropped below 50 was in July 2019, when 42 people died from overdoses. Most months, that number is in the 60s.

Because overdose death figures fluctuate from month to month, it's too soon to say whether the decline will hold. Preliminary numbers typically go up after officials finalize death investigations.

The latest figures bring the total deaths for the first six months of 2023 to 375—a roughly 8% decrease compared with the first six months of 2022.

The number of deaths from fentanyl, the powerful synthetic opioid that is driving the overdose epidemic, also fell nearly 8% to 268 during the first six months of 2023 compared with the first six months of 2022.

Overall, though, the number of people dying from drug overdoses remains high. Because 2022 saw a record high 810 deaths, any decline compared with last year is merely returning to a high baseline. The 375 deaths for the first six months of 2023 surpasses the death counts for the same period in 2019 and 2020.

Workers near toxic site battle for compensation
By Chris Roberts
A half-dozen current and former workers at a UCSF lab-annual colony in Hunters Point that sits next to the heavily polluted former U.S. Navy shipyard have said in workers’ compensation claims that they suffered job-related injuries or health complications that triggered lung problems, hypertension and other illnesses.

The claims, filed in 2020 but only now made public, argue that during the 40 years of active cleanup, the workers had to work in the face of ongoing controversy over the cleanup of the superfund toxic site, the health of people who have lived or worked nearby, and San Francisco’s effort to turn the radioactive former shipyard and atomic-bomb research site into a waterfront neighborhood.

One of the six workers has sued several companies for compensation, arguing that his law firm is owed $20,000 and $12,500, while the rest of the six workers have settled their injury claims.

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