



Preparing for El Niño 2015-2016

Background/History

(Source: National Weather Service)

- Strong El Niño years are correlated with above normal precipitation for So. Calif.
- So. Calif. lacks the equivalent of 1.5-2.5 seasons of precipitation since Jan. 2011. California's last wet year was 2010-11, during La Niña conditions. We need 24-45 inches of precipitation to reach "normal" levels by Sept. 30, 2016.
- Conditions can vary even within strong El Niño years.
- El Niño tends to alter the jet stream to bring more frequent, but not necessarily stronger, storm systems.
- Past strong El Niño years included: 1957/58, 65/66, 72/73, 82/83, 91/92 and 97/98.

Public Action Recommendations

In anticipation of an El Niño, San Diego County residents are encouraged to take steps to prepare for higher-than-normal levels of rain this fall/winter. The following are actions we can all take to protect ourselves, our families, and our properties.

Protect Yourself & Your Family

- Register your cell phone with AlertSanDiego (through ReadySanDiego.org or ListoSanDiego.org).
- Download the free SDEmergency app in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store (also through ReadySanDiego.org or ListoSanDiego.org)
- Make an emergency plan
 - The County of San Diego Family Disaster Plan and Personal Survival Guide will help you and your family plan to stay safe and connected during an emergency.
- Build an emergency preparedness kit, including a flashlight, batteries, cash, and first aid supplies.
- Know what to do during a storm event:
 - Avoid walking or driving through flood waters.
 - Just 6 inches of moving water can knock you down, and 2 feet of water can sweep your vehicle away.
 - Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded and watch out for debris. Floodwaters often erode roads and walkways.
 - Avoid standing water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Visit ReadySanDiego.org or ListoSanDiego.org for more El Niño-related resources, tips, and preparedness materials.



Protect Your Property

- Know your home or property's flood risk by looking at FEMA's [flood-hazard maps](#) and other flood resources at: [msc.fema.gov](#) and [FloodSmart.gov](#).
 - Just because you haven't experienced a flood in the past doesn't mean you won't in the future. Flood risk isn't just based on history. Risk factors include: rainfall, river-flow and tidal-surge data, topography, flood-control measures, and changes due to building and development. (Source: FloodSmart.gov)
- Remember that water flows downhill from the mountains to the oceans through an interconnected system of public and private drainage systems. Inspect your property's drainage channels and culverts routinely, and after every storm, to ensure they are clear.
- Remember: sandbags and other tools not only protect against flooding, they can prevent erosion and keep soil, mud and debris-flows from damaging your home and your neighbor's home, as well as flooding roadways and clogging storm drains and culverts.
 - Pick up free sandbags in the unincorporated areas or contact your local fire department for more information.
- If you have flood insurance, review your policy to make sure you have proper coverage. Keep your policy and insurance agent's contact information on hand in the event you need to file a claim.
- Take and store photos of your possessions (furniture, antiques and collectibles, musical instruments, electronic equipment, etc.) with your other important documents.
- Save receipts for expensive household items (appliances, electronic equipment, etc.) as proof of the original costs.
- Make itemized lists of other possessions such as clothing, books, and small appliances. The more comprehensive your list, the better, in case you need to make a claim.

Know the Facts

Flood Watch – issued by the National Weather Service when the conditions may develop that lead to flash flooding. If a Flood Watch is issued, you should **“Be Aware.”**

- Turn on your TV/radio. You will receive the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- Know where to go. You may need to reach higher ground quickly and on foot.

Flood Warning – issued by the National Weather Service when flooding is imminent or has been reported. Flooding may persist well after the rainfall comes to an end. People in or near locations susceptible to flooding should take necessary precautions immediately. If a Flood Warning is issued, you should **“Take Action.”**

- Turn on your TV/radio. You will receive the latest weather updates and emergency instructions.
- Heed evacuation orders, if instructed.