



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE:

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El Niño is Coming, Are You Ready for the Rain?

Scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory famously referred to this El Niño as the "Godzilla El Nino." In their Oct. 8 El Niño Diagnostic Discussion, the National Weather Service along with the federal Climate Prediction Center stated "there is an approximately 95% chance" that El Niño will continue through the winter and begin to weaken in the spring.

Already this year we have seen multiple major flooding and mudslide events. In mid-October, flooding and mud flows trapped hundreds of motorists in adjacent counties and forced the temporary closure of the I-5 freeway through the Tehachapi Mountains. In early September a couple on a first date got caught in a flash flood at Mill Creek crossing in Forest Falls. While she was able to make it to shore, he did not make it out of the water alive. In August, flash flooding in Riverside County washed out a bridge on the I-10 freeway.

Heavy rainfall can cause normally dry washes and riverbeds to become raging torrents in a very short amount of time and it only takes as little as 12 inches of moving water to move a vehicle. Never cross a road that you can't see due to it being covered by water, remember, "Turn Around, Don't Drown."

Annual winter weather prep around your home can also be helpful for our expected heavy El Niño rain fall. Clean out your rain gutters and keep them clear. Check them after every rain storm to make sure there isn't any debris clogging them. Since you're already up there check your roof too. Find any leaks? Be sure to do the repairs before the first storm rolls through.

The County has multiple locations where you can pick up sandbags and fill them. Go get yours now and have them ready, if you wait for the first storm it may be too late. You can find your closest sandbag location at www.sbcofire.org. While you're there, check out the Ready!Set!Go flood prevention brochure. It's loaded with tips on what to do before, during and after a flood.

County officials are strongly encouraging residents to get flood insurance. Flood insurance is available on almost any enclosed building and farms. The contents of insurable buildings, including rental units, are also insurable. Flood insurance can be purchased through the National Flood Insurance Program at www.floodsmart.gov. It must be purchased at least 30 days before a flooding event, so don't wait until the first rain! Prepare your home now!

Some other helpful resources:

- An El Niño resources web page for residents to obtain information on storm preparation is available at www.sbcounty.gov/main/elnino.asp
- To find your closest sandbag location, check SBCoFire's website at www.sbcofire.org
- Check the National Weather Service at www.weather.gov to see current and upcoming weather events
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's El Niño Portal has regular El Niño forecast updates, www.elnino.noaa.gov