

Are you ready for El Niño?

Some weather models predict rainfalls of up to 300% of the average as a result of El Niño. While there is no way to be certain about the severity of this winter's storms, homeowners would be wise to prepare for the worst. Use this checklist as a guide to getting your home and family ready.



- Learn more about your flood risk and buy flood insurance if you need it. Go to www.floodsmart.gov to help assess your risk. For more information about the National Flood Insurance Program go to www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program.
- Make sure your house is ready to weather the storms:
 - Check your roof for damage and make necessary repairs
 - Clean your gutters and drains
 - Evaluate trees and remove limbs as necessary
 - Secure outdoor furniture so it will not blow around in strong winds
 - Check slopes and retaining walls for erosion, slumping and cracks
 - Check nearby storm drains for debris and other obstructions
- Reduce the amount of water entering your home by placing sandbags in key locations such as over floor drains and in front of doorways, roller doors and vents.
- Create a Family Emergency Plan so that family members know how to find and communicate with each other during an emergency.
- Assemble an Emergency Preparedness Kit including emergency water, food, first aid supplies, spare batteries and other supplies you may need if you are unable to access stores or relief agencies during an emergency. For preparation tips go to www.ready.gov.
- Prepare mobile devices by installing useful apps like the Weather Channel, FEMA, and the Red Cross, as well as your bank and insurance carrier's mobile apps if available.
- Create a list of key contact numbers including emergency services, family members, local relief agencies, and who to report flooding, overflowing manholes, sewage backups, and downed power lines to.
- Plan for an evacuation. Make sure you know where you will go if you are advised or required to evacuate. Fill your car's gas tank before storms to make sure you have enough gas to get you and your family to a safe location.
- After the storm, stay safe during clean up by hiring a cleaning contractor, or if you do the cleanup yourself be sure to wear protective clothing including rubber gloves.