

# El Niño Preparedness Checklist

Worried about El Niño? Print out this basic checklist to help get ready for winter storms.

- Register your cell phone for emergency notifications ([www.scr911.org](http://www.scr911.org)) and download the Code Red app from iTunes or Google Play.
- Check your roof for leaks, especially around flashing where many leaks occur.
- Clear your gutters and downspouts.
- Clear culverts and maintain proper drainage around your property. If you have changed to drought-tolerant landscaping, your drainage patterns may have changed.
- Repaint the wood trim on your home. Paint is a barrier against water intrusion.
- Check window glazing for leaks, and reglaze if needed.
- Check your property for proper grading and surfacing, including making sure water runs away from walls.
- Have shovels, sandbags, plastic sheeting and other emergency equipment on hand. Store in a dry, accessible location.
- Sandbags aren't the only thing that divert water. Straw-waddle landscaping tubing and even bags of dirt can direct water away from structures. Make sure you have them on hand.
- Check stressed trees by calling in an arborist if you have concerns. The drought has been hard on trees, and sudden rains are likely to fell more than a few. For trees in the right-of-way, contact the appropriate agency.
- Secure yard furniture, especially items that might blow away and cause damage during a storm.
- Scan important documents and put on a flash drive or in the cloud. Store drive in a safe location.
- Secure important family items, such as photographs, jewelry, mementos, etc.
- Prepare a family disaster plan and family disaster kit. For more information, go to [www.santacruzcounty.us/elnino](http://www.santacruzcounty.us/elnino).
- Consider flood insurance, even if you're not in a high-risk area.
- If you have a well, ensure that the well head area is clean, clear and sealed. Remove dirt and leaf litter from the well pad and around the well head.
- If you have a septic system, divert drainage away from the system. If you don't already have them, consider riser pipes to monitor water levels.
- If your property is prone to power outages, consider a small generator.
- If you have below-ground areas such as basements or garages, consider a sump pump. If you already have one, make sure it is working.
- If you use an automatic watering system, turn it off during the rainy season.
- Consider a rain barrel to catch water. We're still in a drought, and most local water agencies offer them at low cost.
- Make your house pest-proof if ants and other pests invade your home during rainy weather.
- Check your car tires for wear. Purchase new tires if needed.
- Buy new windshield wipers if needed.
- Make sure your automobile's lights are working.
- Make sure your vehicle's brakes are in good, working order.

\*List partly derived from L.A. Times, "28 Things to do to prepare for El Nino rains this season," <http://www.latimes.com/home/la-hm-el-nino-20151017-story.html>.