



EL NIÑO 2015-16 COMMUNICATION TOOL KIT

Official County of Orange El Niño website:
www.ocelnino.com

Hashtag:
[#ocelnino](https://twitter.com/ocelnino)

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Content is appropriate for newsletters, websites, social media posts

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A. TOOLS FOR GENERAL PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION – APPROPRIATE FOR NEWSLETTERS, WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

1. COPY

About El Niño In Orange County

El Niño is a weather phenomenon related to unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean, triggering greater than usual rainfall as well as storm clusters that can saturate the ground and produce flash flooding.

The County of Orange is responsible for all large flood control channels around the county, as well as street gutters and catch basins in the unincorporated areas and the cities of Mission Viejo, Lake Forest and Dana Point. All other cities maintain their own street gutters and catch basins.

Dangers from El Niño conditions are real: In 1982-83, El Niño storms killed 36 people and caused \$1.2 billion in damages when coastal Orange County areas flooded and mudslides destroyed canyon homes. In December 1997, the most severe storm ever measured in Orange County hit, devastating parts of Laguna Beach, Lake Forest and Irvine, and around the I-5 Freeway. More than seven inches of rain fell in parts of south Orange County in one day.

Residents are encouraged to get ready NOW for expected winter rains and potential flooding:

- Be prepared at home and away!
- Be alert for potential dangers!
- Stay out of rivers, flood channels and storm drains!

What is El Niño? A Brief Background

El Niño was originally recognized by fishermen as the appearance of unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean. Due to its tendency to arrive around Christmas, El Niño means “little boy” and refers to the Christ child. It happens every two to seven years.

In normal conditions, trade winds blow from east to west across the Pacific, dragging warm water as the cool water upwells (rises to the surface). This causes warm air to rise, along with more evaporation and rainfall in the western Pacific. The eastern Pacific experiences lower rainfall as the cooler water that has risen from the deeper levels decreases evaporation.

In El Niño conditions, things are reversed. Trade winds weaken in the central and western Pacific, with less upwelling of cooler water from deeper levels.

The push of warmer water to the western Pacific does not occur, resulting in much greater precipitation along the coast from North America to South America.

(Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)

Personal and Family Safety Preparation – Make A Kit, Make a Plan and Stay Informed

- Make a disaster kit that is portable in case you have to evacuate.
- Have an evacuation plan.
- Keep critical documents and medicine in one place for quick access.
- Have a car ready to go with at least a half tank of gas.
- Have a family communication and reunification plan.
- Sign up for AlertOC at www.alertoc.com to receive notifications and announcements.
- Sign up for OCFA Community Education tests at ocfa.bbcportal.com

(Source: OC Fire Authority)

How to Prepare Your Home for El Niño

- Have roofs repaired and leaks fixed by licensed and bonded contractors.
- Clear gutters, downspouts and roof drains of leaves and other debris.
- Report street storm drains to city public works departments or OC Public Works for those in the unincorporated areas.
- Place sandbags to protect vulnerable areas against flooding around your home.
- Trim all landscaping and branches away from homes, vehicles and power lines.
- Have weakened trees inspected by arborists.
- Prepare a disaster supply kit that is portable in case of evacuation.
- Have a family emergency plan and reunification plan.
- Keep critical documents, keepsakes and medicine in one place for easy access.
- Keep sneakers, a blanket and water in your car in case of emergencies.
- Photograph valuables at your home and property for future insurance claims if needed.
- Sign up for AlertOC at www.alertoc.com

What To Do If You Get Caught In Flood Conditions

- If on foot, do not attempt to walk through floodwaters. Go directly to higher ground. Six inches of swiftly moving water can sweep you off your feet.
- Keep children and pets away from floodwaters, storm drains and sewers.
- Never drive into a flooded area. Most cars can be swept away by less than two feet of water.
- If your car stalls and water is rapidly rising around you, immediately get out and move to higher ground.
- Stay informed of weather predictions and road closures.
- Tune in to local radio and TV stations, and check these resources: www.weather.gov and www.ocstormcenter.com
(Source: OC Fire Authority)

What To Do If Conditions Force You To Evacuate

- Grab your disaster kit and follow your evacuation plan.
- If time permits, disconnect appliances and turn off all lights.
- Lock windows and doors.
- If you evacuate by car, do not drive past barricades or where water is covering the road.
- Stay on recommended evacuation routes as shortcuts may be blocked.
(Source: OC Fire Authority)

Before, During and After the Rain

Before

- Sign up with AlertOC www.alertoc.com to receive emergency notifications.
- Keep emergency supplies on hand, such as a flashlight, water, food, first-aid kit and a portable radio with extra batteries.
- Know how to turn off your utilities.
- Know your access route(s) in and out of your immediate neighborhood.
- Stay informed and monitor weather forecasts to be aware of weather patterns that may impact your immediate area.
- Prepare your property. Clear all drains and rain gutters and dispose of trash and yard trimmings. If you have a rain barrel, check to make sure the downspouts are clear of debris and the connection is working properly. Be sure to remove the overflow drain cover.
- Inspect your roof and check and loose tiles, holes or other signs of trouble.

During

- Monitor local radio stations for information and instructions.
- Do not walk through flooded areas. Just six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- Keep away from flood control debris basins, channels, facilities and river beds.
- Do not drive through flooded areas. A vehicle can be swept away by just two feet of water.
- Keep your distance from downed power lines and electrical wires. Report downed electrical lines. Stay away and call 911 immediately.
- Avoid any unnecessary trips during storms. If you must travel during severe weather, dress appropriately; make sure your vehicle's windshield wipers are in working order; check to make sure tires are properly inflated; advise others of your route and destination.

After

- Check for structural damage before entering your home.
- Remove wet contents such as carpeting, furniture and bedding immediately from your home or building. Mold can develop within 24 to 48 hours. Use dehumidifiers and air conditioners to dry the building.

(Source: City of Lake Forest)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: The storm gutters by my house are blocked. Who should I call?

A: Call your Public Works Department if you live in a city. If you live in an unincorporated area, call OC Public Works at 714-955-0200.

Q: Will my homeowner's insurance policy cover flooding?

A: Standard homeowner's insurance does not cover flooding. The [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#) is available for property owners to financially protect themselves. Most private flood policies have a 30-day waiting period.

Q: How can I keep my home safe from flooding?

A: Homeowners can use sandbags, plywood, straw bales or plastic sheeting to direct flood waters away from buildings and onto the street.

Q: I'm driving and the road ahead is flooded. What should I do?

A: If you can safely: Turn Around, Don't Drown! Avoid walking or driving through flood waters. Just six inches of moving water can knock you down and two feet of water can sweep your vehicle away.

Q: Where can I get more tips to prepare for El Nino?

A: The website ReadyOC is a great resource: <http://www.readyoc.org/>

2. PHOTOS

A variety of labeled photos are posted on the El Niño Communication section of the Corporate Communications Toolkit:

<https://ocgov.sharepoint.com/InfoCentral/ResLib/toolkit/Pages/default.aspx>

EOC Activity 1 	EOC Activity 2 	EOC Activity 3 	EOC Activity 4 	EOC Activity 5 
EOC Activity 6 	Sup. Spitzer at EOC 	Cars trapped by mud 		
Mud Flow 	Rock Hill Slide 	San Juan Creek 1 (SJC) 2010 	San Juan Creek 2 (SJC) 2010 	San Juan Creek 3 (SJC) 2010 
San Juan Creek 2005 	Trabuco Creek 1 (SJC) 2010 	Trabuco Creek 2 (SJC) 2010 	Trabuco Creek 3 (SJC) 2010 	

3. LINKS

For inclusion in newsletters, social media posts, home pages

Official County of Orange El Niño site – www.ocelnino.com

OC Public Works – http://ocpublicworks.com/about/el_nino

OC Watersheds Real-Time Rainfall Totals – <http://ocwatersheds.com/rainrecords/rainfalldata/stormdata/>

Orange County Sheriff’s Department Emergency Management – <http://ocsd.org/divisions/fieldops/emb>

Ready OC – <http://www.readyoc.org/>

CA Dept. of Water Resources:
 Flood Preparedness Video –
<http://www.water.ca.gov/videorelease/floodpreparedness.cfm>

Sandbag Techniques Video –
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fa8ApB_TFc

OC Storm Center – <http://ocstormcenter.com/>

4. HASHTAGS

[#ocelnino](#)

[#OCSDPIO](#)

[#AlertOC](#)

[#readyOC](#)

[#ready4elnino](#)

[#OCFAPIO](#)

5. BROCHURES/INFOGRAPHICS

These resources and collateral pieces are available in the El Niño Communication section of the Corporate Communications Toolkit:

<https://ocgov.sharepoint.com/InfoCentral/ResLib/toolkit/Pages/default.aspx>

<p>Heavy Rainfall Tips</p> 	<p>Before, During, After The Rain</p> 	<p>OCPW El Niño Brochure</p>  <p>(English, Vietnamese, Spanish)</p>	<p>OCFA El Niño Flyer</p>  <p>(English, Vietnamese, Spanish)</p>
 <p>Animal Care Preparation</p>	<p>Sandbagging Procedures</p> 	<p>Where to get sandbags</p> 	
 <p>Fight Flooding at Home</p>	 <p>Santa Ana River Index Grid Overview (Detail of each grid also available)</p>		

6. HELPFUL MEDIA COVERAGE

FOX 11 TV segment on OCPW installing Tiger Dams

<http://www.foxla.com/news/local-news/50313111-story>

ABC7 Eyewitness News segment with OCFA

<http://abc7.com/news/oc-braces-for-forecasted-el-nino-havoc/1093860/>

FOX 11 TV – “All Things El Niño in the OC and LA County”

<http://www.foxla.com/news/local-news/45244357-story>

Orange County Register

Is Orange County ready for El Niño?

<http://www.ocregister.com/articles/water-681268-rain-basins.html>

Dana Point Times

El Niño on the Horizon: the Calm Before the Storm

<http://www.danapointtimes.com/el-nino-on-the-horizon-the-calm-before-the-storm/>

Saigon TV interview with OCPW and Sheriff emergency operation; offers tips residents can take.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tb-STqn7IOg>

Questions? Need help?

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