



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Recently Burned Areas at Higher Flood Risk**

El Niño is expected to drop a large amount of precipitation on our region this winter. While the county is preparing and residents have been given instructions on what they should do to get ready, people that live in areas that have burned recently are presented with unique challenges.

Normally, vegetation absorbs rain, but after a wildfire, the charred ground where that vegetation has been burned away creates a loss of soil strength and can no longer easily absorb rainwater, increasing the risk of flooding and mudflows for several years. Properties directly affected by fires, and those located downstream of burn areas, are most at risk.

Post-fire landslide hazards include fast-moving and highly destructive debris flows. Post-fire debris flows are particularly hazardous because they can occur with little warning, can exert great impulsive loads on objects in their paths, can strip vegetation, block drainage ways, damage structures, and endanger human life. Wildfires could potentially result in the destabilization of pre-existing deep-seated landslides over long time periods.

The best preparation for possible flooding is to plan ahead. The Ready!Set!Go! Flood Preparation brochure will show you some of the things you can do to protect your home, property and family. You'll find information about how to prepare for wet weather, things like cleaning out rain gutters and storm drains, where you can sign up for emergency alerts, fire stations that have sandbags available, and what you should have in an emergency kit. There is also specific information for areas that have recently been burned by wildfire.

Sandbags can best be used to help protect doorways if a waterproof layer like heavy plastic or waterproof canvas is placed behind them. If possible, secure it to the door frame. Stack the sandbags in a pyramid formation and wrap the plastic up and over the top. Keep in mind, sandbags DO NOT guarantee a water-tight seal, but properly placed sandbags can help redirect water, mud and debris away from your home.

Some other helpful resources:

- To find your closest sandbag location and other information on storm preparation check SBCoFire's website at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org).
- Check the National Weather Service at [www.weather.gov](http://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](http://www.elnino.noaa.gov).

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