



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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El Niño is Coming, Are You Ready?

The San Bernardino County Fire Department Office of Emergency Services will host a Public Awareness Meeting regarding this winter's expected El Niño storm system.

El Niño Public Information Meeting Monday, November 9, 5:30 p.m. Yucca Valley Community Center, Yucca Room 57090 Twentynine Palms Hwy., Yucca Valley

The public is strongly encouraged to attend. The best way to get prepared is to get informed. The first 50 attendees will receive a personal disaster preparedness kit from California Volunteers.

In its most recent 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.

After four years of drought, our ground is so dry and hard that it cannot absorb enough water when we do get rain, which leads to dangerous flooding situations. Risks are higher for areas that have experienced wildfires recently, specifically the risk of mudslides. According to the US Geological Survey, "post-fire landslide hazards include fast-moving, highly destructive debris flows that can occur in the years immediately after wildfires in response to high intensity rainfall events."

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.

SBCoFire Office of Emergency Services, the National Weather Service, San Bernardino County Public Works, Caltrans and the U.S. Forest Service will update you on the latest El Niño forecast and how local government is preparing. They will also provide flood preparation materials for residents.

For additional information, please contact the Office of Emergency Services at (909) 356-3998. To learn more about flood preparation, visit www.sbcfire.org.

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