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# **SEBASTOPOL FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## **WHAT IS AN EL NINO & WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE FOR ONE!**

El Nino is the warming of ocean currents in the tropical Pacific Ocean. This warmer water increases air moisture and affects weather. When El Nino is active, there is a greater than normal probability of monsoon like rains along the Pacific Coast of California. These rains, if they develop, can result in small urban streams and washes overrunning their banks as well as regional and large scale flooding.

### **What You Can Do:**

- Prepare your home and contents. Open drains and keep ditches and other water collection ways clear of leaves and debris. Clean your rain gutters of all leaves, debris, and dirt. Have any trees that appear weakened by drought inspected by an arborist. Have roof repairs made and other leaks fixed before it starts to rain.
- Prepare emergency provisions and have an emergency evacuation plan in place for your family. Have a dry place to store storm supplies. Since electric power may be affected, store up plenty of flashlight batteries and if you are on a well or booster pump, store several gallons of bottled water.

- Store “long life” non-refrigerated provisions. This includes emergency cooking equipment, food, water, and fresh batteries. Localized flooding, mud slides and downed trees may prevent you from moving about the community by automobile until public works and emergency services can mobilize and get roadways cleared.
- If your property is low lying or is impacted by high runoff volumes, know where to find sandbags and other emergency provisions. Check with local emergency service agencies before you have an emergency and know where to tune in for emergency broadcasts and official information.
- Consider flood insurance. Homeowner’s policies typically do not cover flood damage. Most flood policies require a 30-day waiting period. Make an itemized list of personal property, which includes clothing, furnishings, and valuables. Take photographs of your home, both inside and out, and store in a safe place. This will help an insurance adjuster to settle any claims and to help you prove uninsured losses.
- Know the non-emergency number to use to reach your local public safety communications center. If you have a storm related problem and it is not a life threatening emergency or fire, you should use the dispatch center’s non-emergency line.
- If you suspect a serious property threat or life safety problem, please dial **9-1-1** or your local emergency number if 9-1-1 is not active in your area.