The City of SAN DIEGO
Mayor Todd Gloria

News Release

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San Diego Prepares for El Niño, Urges Residents to Get Ready

CITYWIDE COORDINATION UNDERWAY AHEAD OF POTENTIAL HEAVY RAINS AND FLOODING

SAN DIEGO – Ahead of the rainy season, City of San Diego emergency officials are urging San Diegans to take steps now to prepare for a potentially very strong El Niño climate pattern that could bring heavy rain and flooding this winter. Residents and property owners are encouraged to know their flood risk, create an emergency plan and sign up for emergency alerts to help protect themselves and their families.

"El Niño conditions could bring heavier rain to San Diego this winter, and we are taking action now to prepare," said Mayor Todd Gloria. **"For months, departments across the City have been working together to prepare our infrastructure, strengthen our emergency response and identify areas vulnerable to flooding. That work will continue throughout the rainy season as we prepare communities across San Diego and focus additional resources where they are needed most. We need San Diegans to prepare with us by knowing their flood risk, making an emergency plan and staying informed. Preparing now will help protect our homes, our neighborhoods and each other when the rain comes."**

In collaboration with regional partners and the National Weather Service, the City's Office of Emergency Services has launched an educational campaign urging San Diegans to prepare. A new El Niño in San Diego webpage provides resources to help residents understand their flood risk, prepare for extreme weather, and to sign up for emergency alerts.

The Office of Emergency Services has also convened an El Niño working group with representatives from all City departments and public safety agencies to coordinate preparedness, response operations and public information ahead of the rainy season.

"In anticipation of a strong El Niño, the greater our collective preparation, the greater our resiliency," said Council President Joe LaCava. **"The potential severity of storms could overwhelm even the cleanest channel or infrastructure. The City's proactive planning and comprehensive coordination will aid San Diegans before, during, and after heavy storms. Through education and preparation you can help protect yourself, your family, and your business. Stay informed and take steps now."**

"San Diegans deserve to know their City is doing everything it can to keep them safe before the first heavy storm arrives," said Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera. **"The 2024 floods showed us how devastating extreme weather can be for families and neighborhoods. We have a responsibility to prepare now by partnering with community, strengthening our infrastructure, focusing resources where the risks are greatest, and making sure every San Diegan has the information they need to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their homes."**

In San Diego, 15,000 acres and more than 6,900 structures are located in FEMA-designated flood hazard areas. Flooding can occur outside designated flood zones, so property owners and renters are encouraged to consider flood insurance. Through the City's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, thousands of eligible local property owners and renters receive access to a 15% discount on flood insurance premiums.

Over the next month, information will be mailed to more than 7,000 properties in high-risk flood areas with guidance on protecting property, understanding flood risk and purchasing flood insurance.

In flood-prone areas across San Diego, the City's Stormwater Department is working to clean and maintain stormwater infrastructure including channels and storm drains. Over the past fiscal year, crews maintained more than 11 miles of stormwater channels, prioritizing areas impacted by the 2024 floods and other locations known to experience flooding during heavy rains. Additionally, the City plans to perform maintenance on more than 20 miles of channels in fiscal year 2027, which began in July.

In some areas, stormwater channels are privately owned. The Stormwater Department will notify approximately 180 property owners of their responsibilities for cleaning and maintaining privately-owned stormwater channels.

Even with this preparation, intense rainfall over a short period can overwhelm stormwater systems and cause flooding. Residents should remain alert during storms and never attempt to drive or walk through flooded areas.

"For months, our office has been working closely with City departments and regional partners to plan and prepare for this El Niño weather event," said Assistant Fire Chief Rob Rezende, who oversees the Office of Emergency Services**. "We remain focused on coordinating all available resources to weather this storm season. Residents also need to take steps to stay ready. We urge everyone to understand the hazards in their neighborhoods, create a personal or family emergency plan, build an emergency go-kit, know where to find verified information from public safety officials, and sign up for emergency alerts at AlertSanDiego.org. For the latest information and resources, go to our El Niño website. Stay ready San Diego, preparedness is everyone's responsibility."**

"NWS San Diego and the City of San Diego share a strong partnership. We maintain a seat at the Emergency Operations Center and provide weekly briefings on upcoming weather," said National Weather Service Meteorologist Felix Castro. **"In the event of an emergency, we are there to support the City, just as they consistently support us with damage reports and vital information."**

Disasters can happen at any time and it is crucial to be ready before an emergency occurs. Emergency officials encourage San Diegans to take these steps now:

- Create an emergency plan with your family and loved ones; know your evacuation routes.
- Have an emergency kit with enough supplies for three days, including water, food, batteries, flashlights, pet supplies, medications and important documents in a water-proof container.
- Sign up for emergency alerts to stay informed. Alert San Diego is the County's emergency notification system.
- During a storm, never drive or walk through flooded areas. Monitor weather alerts and move to higher ground if flooding is a threat.

For more emergency resources related to El Niño, including tips to protect your home and property, materials available in multiple languages and a video public service announcement, visit the City's El Niño webpage.



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