



By Candace Cook with Ann Floden

IS A SUPER EL NINO FORMING?

A potentially historic “super” El Niño is underway, bringing warmer Pacific waters and increasing the likelihood of a wetter-than-normal winter in Southern California. This advance warning comes from scientists who track ocean temperatures off South America/Ecuador. Check the diagram below for the effects on our country.

Heavy rainfall can cause rapid runoff from our local mountains, raising the risk of flooding. Our Sun City Palm Desert was designed with flood mitigation in mind: homes are built on knolls, swales channel water away from foundations, and golf courses/green spaces direct excess water into designated flood channels. Even with safeguards, patios, back yards and streets can still flood during major storms.



TYPICAL EL NINO IMPACTS

Before the Flood: Early Action to Reduce Your Risk

Before flooding occurs, take steps to protect your property and family. Seal foundations and windows, maintain drainage systems, and elevate critical items above potential flood levels. Keep sandbags or other flood barriers on hand, bring outdoor furniture indoors, and move valuables and electronics to higher ground. There are a variety of “sandless sand bags”, which are easily found by googling the web or checking out your local hardware store. Example: a 10 foot long barrier costs about \$25.



SANDLESS SAND BAG

Know how to shut off gas, electricity & water and prepare an emergency go-bag for your household and pets with at least three days of supplies, including water, food, flashlights, batteries, first-aid items, and your important documents stored in waterproof containers.

During the Flood: Stay Safe Inside

If flooding occurs, stay safe by avoiding contact with floodwater. Don’t walk or wade thru moving or standing water. Six inches of moving water can knock a person off their feet. Use extreme caution when driving thru standing water. It could be deeper than you think. When in doubt, turn around and find an alternate route. Just one foot of water is enough to lift a car off the ground and once floating, control of the vehicle is lost. More than half of all drownings related to floods happen when the car has been driven into the floodwater.

Observe road closures. Muddy water can hide damage done to the road and floodwater is often contaminated. Never touch electrical equipment while wet or standing in water and leave immediately if water reaches electrical outlets. Follow evacuation orders without delay. Be familiar with all 5 vehicle gates in our community.

Remember the National Weather Service Alert Levels:

-  **Flood Advisory** means conditions warrant increased awareness.
-  **Flood Watch** means flooding is possible and you should be prepared.
-  **Flood Warning** means flooding is imminent or occurring.
-  **Flash Flood Warning** signals a sudden, dangerous flood that is imminent or already under way.



Stay Home, Stay Safe and Keep Informed