Extreme Wet Weather Preparedness
Best Practices for Cities

Best Practices for Extreme Wet Weather Preparedness

The following practices for extreme wet weather preparedness, including storm surges, flooding, and El Niño disaster conditions, were compiled at a 2026 Cal Cities Roundtable attended by over 190 local officials and city representatives.

Communication

- Develop preparedness and emergency response webpages to start communication early with community members.
- Provide regular updates and briefings to city council, including preparing any local emergency resolutions or ordinances that may be needed.
- Establish communication and public messaging protocols and systems, such as alert notifications, and encourage residents to subscribe before a disaster strikes.
- Establish clear evacuation orders and procedures that community members know in advance.
- Ensure adequate staffing for 24/7 emergency operations centers so that staff can communicate effectively leading up to, during, and after storms.

Preparedness Efforts

- Identify reliable, accurate weather forecasts and stay informed on weather-related information and sources.
- Prepare for a range of weather scenarios, including light, medium, and heavy rainfall and related impacts, as well as snowfall in some regions.
- Identify and address flood-prone areas and burn scar areas where conditions can worsen.
- Establish sandbag distribution protocols, programs, and events for residents to sandbag on their own properties.
- Conduct routine maintenance in advance of storm events, such as clearing storm drains and securing k-rails.
- Survey areas and conduct vegetation and debris management in advance of storms to minimize potential damage.

Coordination

- Establish a citywide emergency readiness task force with representatives from all city departments involved in response.
- Train the emergency readiness task force on communication systems, programs, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's reimbursement processes.
- Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions (particularly smaller cities with limited resources), as well as with your county counterparts, especially on emergency operations center coordination.

Coordination, cont.

- Coordinate with schools and community partners to share information, including educational and emergency resources.
- Coordinate with the state, including the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and Health and Human Services Agency, to support vulnerable populations, such as older adults or residents experiencing homelessness, during emergencies and through state programs or resources.

Resources

- State Executive Orders:
  - Sept. 21 State of Emergency Proclamation
  - Oct. 27 Executive Order N-13-26
  - Oct. 27 Executive Order N-14-26

- State El Niño Resources:
  - Listos California (Ready California) – El Niño Webpage
  - El Niño Communications Toolkit and Resource Hub
  - Sign up for Emergency Alerts
  - Emergency Recovery Resources

- Example City Websites:
  - City of Moreno Valley – El Niño Preparedness Webpage
  - Town of Corte Madera – Flood Preparedness Resources
  - City of Vacaville – Emergency Preparedness Webpage