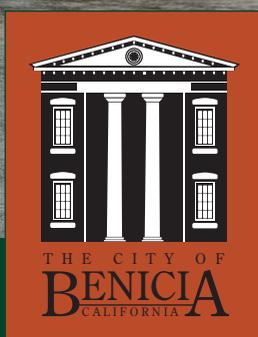




Photo Credit:
Dave Gatley/FEMA



El Niño

Flood Preparedness and Response Guide for Homeowners & Residents

Provided by:
City of Benicia
& the Association of Bay Area Governments
Pooled Liability Assurance Network

Dear Resident:

The City of Benicia recognizes that flood incidents can be stressful. The City has prepared this booklet to help you minimize the impact of a flood loss by responding promptly to the situation. The booklet also serves as a guide for preparing for the possibility of future floods due to El Niño or other weather events.

If you do experience flooding, the City will investigate the cause. If our investigation determines that the City is responsible for the incident, the costs you incur for reasonable and necessary cleanup may be included in the settlement of your claim.

Regardless of whether you or the City is responsible for the loss, it is up to you to arrange for the repair of your property and to present a claim for consideration. You or the property owner should immediately contact a firm for cleanup of the affected areas. If you do not know of a company to call for service, refer to the facing page for 24-hour emergency contact information for restoration companies.

Do not attempt to clean the affected area yourself, let the company you hire handle this. While you are waiting for a crew to arrive:

- Keep people and pets away from the affected area(s),
- Turn off heating/air conditioning systems,
- Do not remove items from the area, and
- Contact your homeowner's insurance carrier to report a claim.

If you wish to file a claim with the City, contact the City Clerk at City Hall, 250 East L Street, Benicia, (707) 746-4200, as soon as practical. The California Government Code, Sections 900 - 960, requires filing a written claim and outlines specific timelines and notice procedures that must be used.

If you have any questions or if you observe street flooding, traffic signal outage, or streetlight knockdown call the Public Works Department at (707) 746-4296 during business hours or at (707) 745-3412 after hours.

Sincerely,
The City of Benicia

Local Restoration Companies*

All companies serve the Bay Area including Benicia.

Restoration Management Company
Benicia
(800) 400-5058
(707) 750-6320

911 Remediation
Vallejo
(707) 637-8102
(510) 544-8376

ServiceMaster Restore
Concord
(800) 480-8439

Servpro
Martinez
(925) 372-7234

PuroClean - PuroFirst
Sonoma County
(707) 538-1772

Montgomery Sansom Ltd.
Alameda
(800) 576-3313

American Technologies, Inc.
Hayward
(510) 429-5000

*This list is provided as resource only. The City does not require or endorse the use of any of these firms. This list is not to be construed as exclusive, comprehensive or limiting in any way. Qualified contractors can be found in the Yellow Pages under "Water Damage Restoration" or "Fire & Water Damage Restoration". However, be sure you hire a firm with experience in sewer backups and enough resources to get the job done quickly.

What is El Niño?

El Niño is not a single storm. It is a complex weather pattern caused by unusually warm temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, which can have large-scale impacts on global weather and climate.

According to the California Coastal Commission, some models predict rainfalls of up to 300% of the average rainfall in Southern California. Meteorologists in central California and the San Francisco Bay forecast that rainfalls could be up to 200% of average. While there is no way to be certain about the severity of this winter's storms, homeowners would be prudent to prepare for the worst.

Source: California Coastal Commission, www.coastal.ca.gov

Flood Insurance

One way to protect your home is to purchase flood insurance. Your homeowner's or renter's insurance may not cover destruction caused by certain kinds of disaster, including floods, so you will probably need a separate flood insurance policy. Most policies will have a 30-day waiting period before they are in effect, so contact your insurance company as soon as possible to make sure you are covered.

Now is the best time to check with your insurance agency to review your coverage. All Benicia residents have the opportunity to insure their property against future flood damage; please visit www.floodsmart.gov or contact your insurance agent for more information.

Flood Zone mapping for Benicia is prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA). The City of Benicia can assist you in determining in which flood zone your property is located. Please contact the Community Development Department at (707) 746-4280 or stop by the Community Development Department at City Hall.

Once you have a policy, be sure to keep the policy and an itemized list of your personal property in a safe (and dry!) location.

If you have experienced a flood, contact your insurance carrier immediately to file a claim.

For more information about the National Flood Insurance Program go to: www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program.

Ensure that medical and financial records—including your insurance policies—are in a waterproof container and store additional copies in a separate secure location.

Prepare your house

Make sure your house is ready to weather the storms:

Roof: Check for leaks, loose or missing shingles, gaps in the flashing around chimneys, holes and other damage. Hire a roofing contractor as needed to make repairs.

Gutters and Drains: Make sure gutters are clear of leaves and other debris. Gutters should be connected to downspouts that guide water away from the foundation. Visually inspect retaining wall drains to make sure they are clear of obstructions.

Yard: Consult an arborist to evaluate trees and remove limbs as necessary before the storms. If trees have grown over or around power lines on your property, call PG&E at (800) 743-5000. If there are large bare areas that could cause mudflows during a storm, consider putting down plastic sheeting and securing them with sandbags. Secure outdoor furniture and other loose items from causing damage during periods of heavy winds.

Slopes and Retaining Walls: Visually inspect for erosion, slumping and cracks. If there are signs of slope movement, have the site inspected by a geotechnical engineer.

Some great resources
for home preparation advice:

www.coastal.ca.gov
www.ready.gov
www.floodsmart.gov

Sandbags

You can reduce the amount of water entering your home by placing sandbags in key locations. Place sandbags over floor drains (including shower and bath), and in front of doorways, roller doors and vents. For maximum effectiveness, stagger the sandbags in an overlapping pattern like brickwork. You do not necessarily want to place a sandbag wall around your whole house. Before you place them, consider how you would remove floodwater if it got trapped between the sandbag and your building (e.g., pump, siphon, bailing bucket).

Don't wait for
the rain to start!
Set sandbags in place
well before the
storm.

Empty sand bags and sand to fill them are available for City of Benicia residents and businesses at the Benicia Corporation Yard at 2400 East 2nd Street and the East E Street parking lot (across the street from the Benicia Yacht Club).

For more information about sandbags, go to www.ci.benicia.ca.us and search "winter storms" and click the link on the page.

Storm Drains

Keep your streets and gutters free of leaves and debris that may clog storm drains. Street sweeping equipment is not designed to pick up large quantities of leaves particularly when they are wet. The sweeper drivers will often make several passes of those streets with heavy leaf drop in an attempt to collect as much as possible, but they will not be able to clear all the streets. If you have too many leaves to fit in your yard waste toter, you can order additional toters from Republic Services.

If you find that water is pooling around the storm drain on your street and beginning to flood the area, IF IT IS SAFE consider taking a rake and removing the leaves and debris from around the drain to allow free water flow. Public Works Maintenance crews are very willing to respond calls for assistance, but during heavy rains they may not be able to get to each storm drain as quickly as desired. Please contact (707) 746-4296 during business hours for assistance or (707) 745-3412 after 4:30 pm.



Family Emergency Plan

In an emergency, your family may not be together so it is important to plan ahead so everyone knows what they need to do.

- Make sure each family member will receive alerts through school, work or emergency notification systems.
- Decide on a safe meeting place in your neighborhood (such as a neighbor's house), one outside your neighborhood (such as a library, community center or church), and one outside your town (such as a relative's house). Discuss how each family member would get to the safe meeting places.
- Write down important phone numbers and email addresses for family members and an out-of-town contact who can act as a central point of contact if your family gets separated.

For more information about creating a family emergency plan and assembling an emergency preparedness kit go to www.ready.gov.

Assemble basic items that you may need if you are unable to access stores or emergency relief during an emergency. Items to include:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Local maps
- Whistle to signal for help
- Manual can opener for food
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation

Don't forget Fido!
Make an emergency kit for your pets too including food, water, leash, blanket and a toy

Depending on your needs, additional items could be added:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Books, games and/or puzzles
- Paper and pencil
- A first aid guide



Prepared for the City of Benicia

Stay Informed

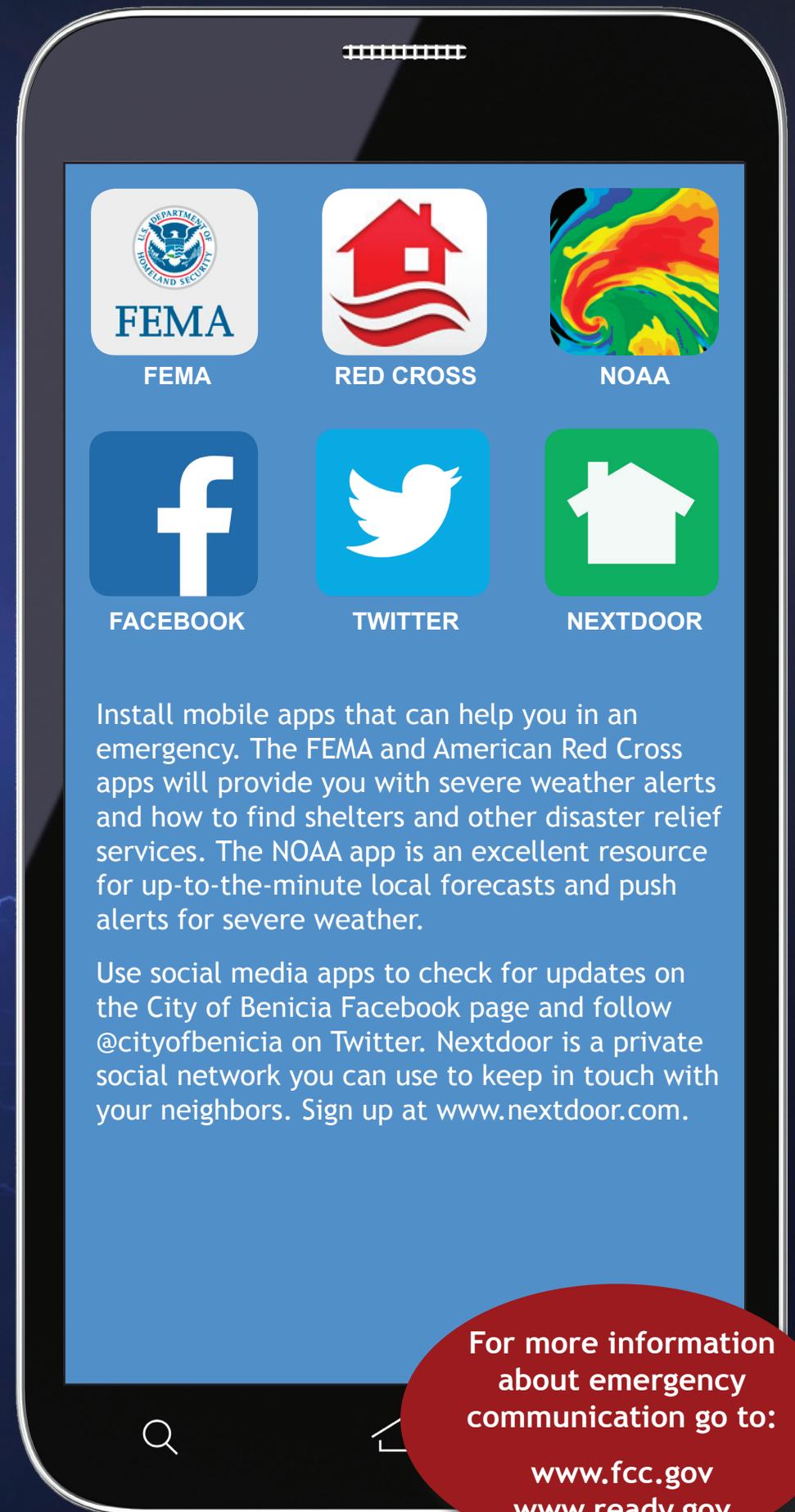
In the event of an emergency, communication becomes essential. You will want to keep in touch with family, contact emergency services, communicate with insurance companies, and more.

Make sure you get warnings and alerts:

- In the event of a disaster or emergency, the City of Benicia may activate the Community Alert and Notification (CAN) System, which may include a series of sirens placed throughout the City.
- Monitor local and regional media for alerts and notifications:
 - Benicia TV (BTV) on Comcast Channel 27 and AT&T U-Verse Channel 99
 - Local information radio channels: FM 89.5 and AM 1610
 - Local radio news medial channels: KCBS 740 AM (San Francisco), KGO 810 AM (San Francisco), and KZCT 89.5 FM (Benicia)
 - Online local newspapers: The Benicia Herald at www.beniciaheraldonline.com, and the Vallejo Times Herald at www.timesheraldonline
- Check the City of Benicia's website www.ci.benicia.ca.us periodically for emergency notifications.
- Go to the National Weather Service website at www.weather.gov for forecasts and weather alerts.

Phone Tips

- Keep your mobile phone fully charged at all times while the power is on.
- Keep charged batteries, a car phone charger, and a solar charger available for backup.
- Conserve battery by reducing brightness of screen, placing phone in airplane mode, closing unnecessary apps, and limiting use.
- Maintain a household landline and analog phone (with a backup battery if it is cordless).
- Have call forwarding on your phone and set it to forward to your mobile phone if you evacuate.
- If you don't have a mobile phone, purchase a pre-paid phone card for emergency use.



Prepare to Evacuate

In the event of severe flooding, an evacuation order may be issued. You may need to leave your home very quickly, so you should be prepared in advance.

Know where you are going:

Choose a shelter location as close to your home as possible to minimize potentially dangerous travel. Some options include:

- A friend or relative's house. Stay nearby if possible, but not within the evacuation area.
- A hotel or motel. Make reservations as soon as possible. Most hotels and motels will fill up quickly.
- A shelter. Contact FEMA and/or the local Red Cross for shelter locations.

Be ready to go:

- Fill your car's gas tank before a storm hits so you won't run out of gas in evacuation traffic.
- Prepare an emergency preparedness kit and bring it with you, especially if you are going to a shelter.

Right before you go:

- Go to www.511.org to learn about any road closures.
- Unplug electrical equipment like televisions and small appliances, but leave refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.
- Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Close and lock doors and windows.
- Dress appropriately with warm clothes and rain gear.

Refer to the Stay Informed page in this booklet for information about how you will be notified of an evacuation.



How will I find my family?

Ideally you have planned for possible separation in your family emergency plan. But if you are separated from your family during a disaster you may be able to reconnect through the American Red Cross Safe and Well program.

Go to www.redcross.org/safeandwell or call (866) GET-INFO and register yourself as “Safe and Well” or search for others who have registered.

If you are separated from your family during a Presidentially-declared disaster you can also contact FEMA’s National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRLS) at (800) 588-9822 or go to: <https://egateway.fema.gov/inter/nefrls/home.htm>

Turn Around... don't drown!™

Never drive through floodwaters or on flooded roads. If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground. Water only two feet deep can float away most automobiles.

Source: National Weather Service

During the Storm...

- Continue to monitor local news and weather for flash flood warnings, evacuation orders, whether the water supply is safe to drink, or other emergency notifications.
- Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve if advised to do so.
- If water rises in your home before you evacuate, go to the top floor, attic, or roof.
- Stay away from any building that is surrounded by floodwaters.
- Stay away from downed power lines and report them to the power company.
- Avoid contact with floodwaters as they may be contaminated or electrically charged from downed or underground power lines.
- Stay off of the roadways to keep them clear for emergency vehicles. If you must drive, use caution and adhere to any detours, warnings or barricades. If your car stalls in rising waters, leave the vehicle immediately and get to higher ground.
- Avoid moving water, storm-damaged areas and areas known to be susceptible to flooding. Even shallow moving water can sweep you off your feet. Roadways where floodwaters have receded may be damaged and unstable.

Stay Healthy!

Experiencing a flood can be physically and emotionally draining. Be sure to get enough rest, eat healthy food, set reasonable goals for progress with cleanup, and seek emotional support if you need it.

Contact the local Red Cross chapter at (707) 438-7060 for help finding emotional support services.

After a Flood...

Get your flood recovery off to a good start by following this checklist during the first 24 hours:

- ❑ Make sure your family and neighbors are okay. Seek medical help if anyone is injured.
- ❑ Do not return to your home until it is safe to do so. Monitor local news to find out when evacuation orders are lifted.
- ❑ Check for visible structural damage to the building. Look for cracks in the foundation, warping, holes and other signs of a compromised structure. Be very cautious when entering buildings. Once inside, check for ceiling damage before entering each room.
- ❑ Contact utility companies if you suspect damage to water, gas, electric, or sewage lines.
- ❑ Turn off all electrical sources within the home. Even if the power is off, shut off the main and each individual fuse connection. This will ensure that if the power comes back on you won't mix standing water with electrical current. Keep power off until an electrician advises you it is safe to turn it back on.
- ❑ Take photographs of all damage to your home and possessions BEFORE you start any clean up or repairs.
- ❑ Contact your insurance carrier immediately to begin the claims process. If you are not able to reach your local insurance adjuster, call the company's headquarters.
- ❑ Avoid contact with the water. Even if water is clear, it may have been contaminated by sewage or household chemicals. Wear boots and rubber gloves to protect yourself while in contact with floodwaters or damaged items.
- ❑ Boil water for drinking and cooking until authorities advise you that the local water supply is safe. Throw away any food that may have come into contact with floodwaters.
- ❑ Find out if your region has been officially declared a disaster area. If so, you may have access to increased resources or financial assistance. Go to www.disasterassistance.gov and enter your address to see if your area has been declared and to apply online.
- ❑ Remove water and start drying out your home. Use a sump pump, wet vac and/or buckets to remove water. Open doors and windows and use fans and dehumidifiers to speed up the drying process. Open closet and cabinet doors and remove drawers to allow air circulation.
- ❑ Mitigate mold damage, which may start to occur within 24 to 48 hours after a flood. Remove wet contents including carpeting and bedding as soon as possible. Notify your insurance carrier before removing items. Always photograph any damaged items before you move or discard them.

Recovery and Restoration

Once you get past the first 24 hours you should set a longer term plan:

- Get professional help. Be realistic about your own abilities. You may be able to handle tasks like removing small debris and cleaning damaged areas, but unless you have experience in construction and electrical repair, you will probably need to hire contractors to assess the damage and provide repair estimates.
- Follow up with your insurance carrier if you have submitted a claim. Submit photos of the flood damage and complete any required paperwork. Consult your claims adjuster before discarding any damaged items.
- Make a financial plan. Once you have repair and insurance estimates, determine how you will pay for any expenses that are not covered. If you need financial assistance contact your local Red Cross chapter and check local news media for charitable and government disaster programs.
- Arrange for safe housing if you are unable to return to your residence.



Beware of Scams!

Be very careful about who you hire for construction, debris removal, and other services you may need after a flood. There may be people seeking to make a profit from your misfortune. Take your time, check references, ask for documentation of insurance and licenses, require a written estimate, and read contracts very carefully before allowing any work to begin. Be wary of out-of-town contractors and anyone who requires payment in advance.

If you do decide to do some cleanup yourself follow these guidelines:

- Keep children and pets out of the affected areas until cleanup is done.
- Wear protective clothing including rubber gloves and rubber boots.
- Be careful with cleaning solutions and never mix them. Some can cause toxic fumes when mixed together.
- When in doubt throw it out! Throw out all food, beverages and medicine exposed to flood waters and mud. Throw out any items that absorb water and cannot be cleaned and disinfected.
- Assess tree damage. While you can probably do some cleanup of broken branches and small debris, leave tree removal to a certified arborist.



For more information about safe cleanup after severe weather go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/cleanup

Contact List

Emergency:
Police, Fire, Ambulance
911

Non-Emergency Police Department:
(707) 745-3412

Non-Emergency Fire Department:
(707) 746-4275

Public Works Department:
(707) 746-4296 (business hours)
(707) 745-3412 (after hours)

To Report Obstructed Storm Drain or Street Flooding:
Public Works Department (see contact information above)

In Case of Traffic Signal Outage or Streetlight Knockdown:
Public Works Department (see contact information above)

To Inquire About Tree Trimming Near Power Lines or to Report Trees
Growing Over Power Lines:
PG&E (800) PGE-5000

To Obtain Sandbags: Benicia Corporation Yard
2400 East 2nd Street and the East E Street parking lot
(across the street from the Benicia Yacht Club)

For Information About Flood Zones:
Community Development Department (707) 746-4280

For Information About Major Emergency or Disaster Situations:
Solano County Office of Emergency Services (707) 784-1600

PG&E (Gas/Electricity):
24-hr Customer Service: (800) PGE-5000
24-hr Power Outage: (800) PGE-5002

American Red Cross Solano County:
(707) 438-7060 and www.redcross.com

For More Information About Storm Preparation:
Go to www.ci.benicia.org and search "winter storms"



This booklet provided by:

City of Benicia
and



Prepared for the City of Benicia



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Benicia, CA 94510