



# FEMA

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Federal Emergency Management Agency  
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**HOLD for Release:** December 9, 2015

## **TODAY: FEMA Releases Severe El Nino Disaster Response Plan For California, Arizona, Nevada**

*Combined Federal, State task force to meet today at Governor's Office of Emergency Services*

**Sacramento Calif.,**-- The FEMA Region 9 office, in Oakland, CA has established an El Niño task force charged with preparing the regional office and its partners for the impacts of El Niño. Today, the FEMA Region 9 Office released its Severe El Nino Disaster Response plan and will convene a regional interagency steering committee meeting in Northern California to exercise the plan.

The task force has evaluated the core capabilities needed to prepare for, respond to, recover from and mitigate against any El Niño related incident that occurs across the office's area of responsibility. The task force has developed an Executive Decision Support Guide, or response plan, and an interactive flood decision support tool to enhance the regional office's ability to respond to potential El Niño flood events during the winter of 2015-2016. The plan, released today, seeks to align actionable decision points in order to gather critical information leaders need to make informed decisions by determining the hazard level potentially impacting lives, public health, safety, property, and critical infrastructure.

FEMA recognizes that a government-centric approach to emergency management is not enough to meet the challenges posed by a catastrophic incident.

"Utilizing a 'whole community' approach to emergency management reinforces the fact that FEMA is only one part of our nation's emergency management team, said Bob Fenton, FEMA Region 9 Administrator. "The exercise gives us an opportunity to learn from each other, and from the experts in the areas where solutions will come from,"

The objectives of the task force are:

- Establish actionable processes and procedures to identify the location, potential impacts, and probability of occurrence of natural hazards
- Identify key at-risk populations, critical facilities and natural/cultural resources
- Identify gaps in core capabilities needed to overcome the threat
- Develop key messages to motivate partners to prepare and act

The task force consists of subject matter experts from the FEMA Region 9 office as well as other federal, state, local, tribal and community partners.

"There aren't many types of disasters capable of impacting all Arizonans, but a strong El Niño could cause flooding, evacuations and power outages anywhere (and everywhere) in the state," said Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs Deputy Director Wendy Smith-

Reeve. “It takes a team effort to plan for, respond to and recover from the kinds of widespread consequences being talked about, which is why we’re invested in the education and training of and outreach to the whole community.”

The El Nino task force has focused on interpreting data in areas of California, Arizona and Nevada that have proved historically vulnerable in order to develop risk projections of current El Niño events. It is through this assessment the task force seeks to determine the critical decision points needed by senior leaders during all phases of an incident from pre-incident, incident onset, through response and recovery.

Today, the FEMA Region 9 Office will participate in a Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) exercise with its disaster response partners to exercise the response plan and its flood decision support tools. During this exercise, participants will identify issues, gaps and shortfalls that will enhance the plan. The task force will leverage best available data from predictive modeling and other analytical tools to keep senior decision makers informed throughout potential El Niño events. The efforts undertaken by the task force during the ROC will enable the FEMA Region 9 Office, its partners and ultimately the disaster survivor to make intelligent decisions for any El Niño related event.

**To facilitate open discussion on sensitive information the entire event will not be open press, but there will be two opportunities and options for media participation during today’s exercise.**

**WHEN: Wednesday, December 9, 2015**

**WHERE: In Person** from 9 am – 9:30 am in Sacramento, California.  
Or  
**Virtually** at 12:15 during telephonic media briefing and Q & A.

### **Virtual Telephonic Press Conference and Q & A**

12:15 **Virtual Press Availability via Conference Telephone Line**

***\*Space is limited! Please RSVP to the listed media contacts to request media access and dial-in information in advance.*** Due to limited availability of conference lines the call will be limited to accredited members of the press.

#### **In- Person:**

Members of the media are welcome to attend the morning portion of the event from 9:00 am – 9:30. Media must RSVP in advance to Mary Simms at [mary.simms@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:mary.simms@fema.dhs.gov). Please include your name, contact information and media affiliation in your request. **RSVP:** Please note that space is limited and an advance RSVP is required to gain access and location information to attend the event.

**Members of the media:** Please email Mary Simms at [mary.simms@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:mary.simms@fema.dhs.gov) for additional details and to request a copy of the FEMA Region 9 El Nino Disaster Response Plan.

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