

COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU

NOTICE
16.2

October 15, 2015

TO: All Commanding Officers

FROM: Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BULLETIN VOLUME 10, NUMBER 10 –
2015 “GODZILLA EL NIÑO”

The Emergency Preparedness Bulletin, Volume 10, No. 10, entitled 2015 – “*Godzilla El Niño*” is now available on the Department’s Local Area Network under the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator link. In anticipation of the El Niño weather system expected in the upcoming months, Area/Divisions should review and update as necessary their flood inundation plans found within their respective Standing Plans.

If there are any questions regarding this Notice, please contact Sergeant I Michael Hammett, Officer in Charge, Emergency Preparedness Unit, Emergency Operations Division, at (213) 486-5730.

APPROVED:



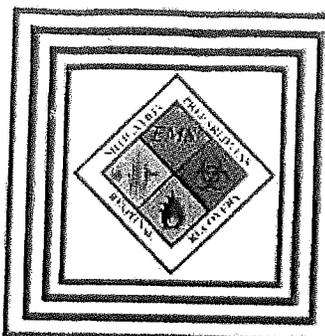
MICHAEL P. DOWNING, Deputy Chief
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SEAN W. MALINOWSKI, Commander
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Attachment

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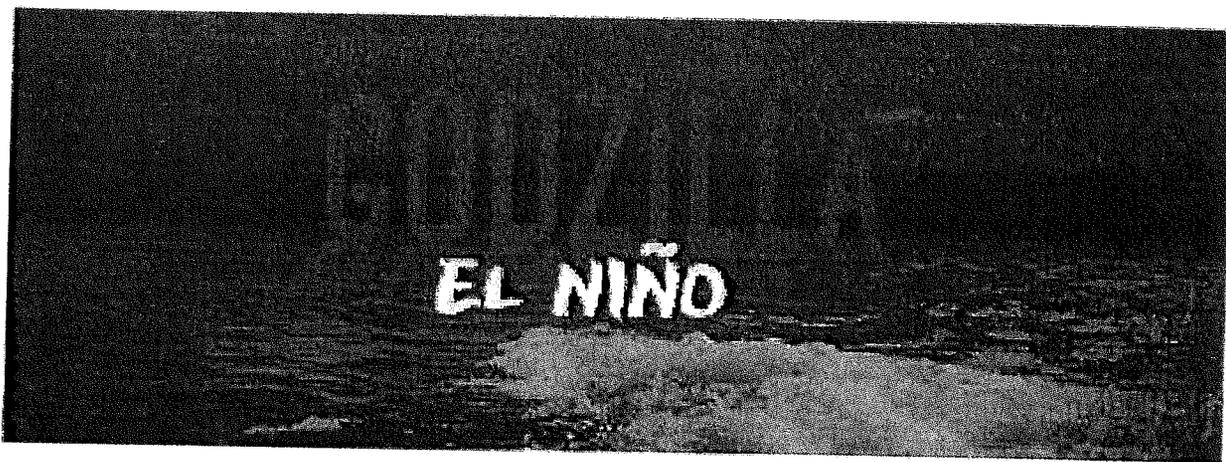
Los Angeles Police Department
Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
BULLETIN

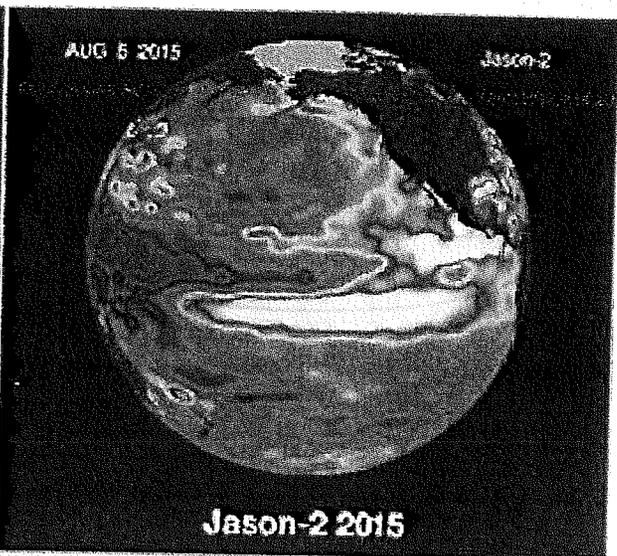
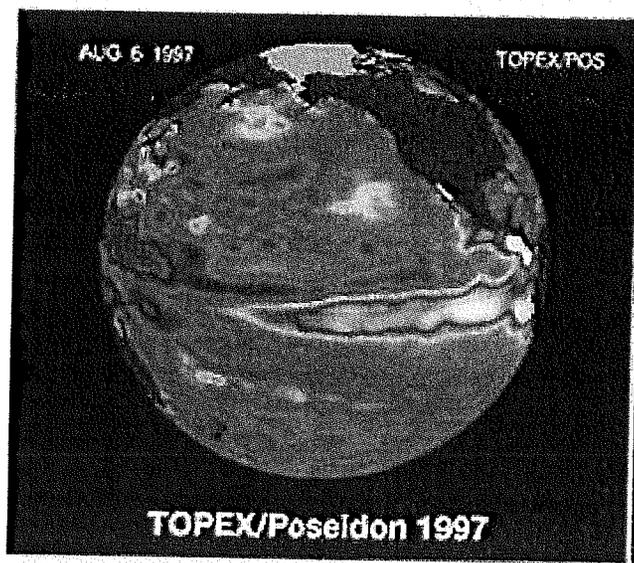
Volume 10, Number 10

SEPTEMBER 2015

Prepared by Emergency Operations Division



The 2015 - El Niño is forecasted to possibly be the strongest on record. Based on the current build-up of contributing factors, researchers are referring to this particular coming El Niño as the "Godzilla El Niño." According to Angela Fritz, Atmospheric Scientist and Deputy Weather Editor for the Washington Post, "This year's El Niño exploded across the equatorial Pacific Ocean in March and April, while the 1997 version was still getting its legs." Bill Patzert, climatologist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory stated in a Los Angeles Times article, "In February of 1998 alone, we had four big storms and two small storms, and we got almost a year of rain in one month." Patzert continued by stating, "February looked like something that should have been spread over the entire winter." Using the past El Niño experience as an indicator for future weather behavior, what this may mean to those of us in Southern California is, in the coming winter months, we will likely get a large amount of rain in a very short period of time.



HOW EL NIÑO AFFECTS WEATHER

NORMAL CONDITIONS ▶

Where the ocean is warm, more clouds form, and more rain falls in that part of the world. In the Pacific Ocean, near the equator, the Sun makes the water especially warm on the surface.

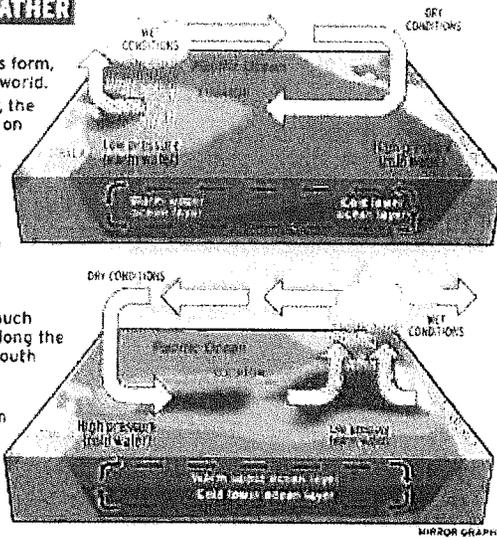
Normally, strong trade winds push the warm surface water from South America westward toward Indonesia. This makes the cooler water underneath rise up toward the surface of the ocean near South America.

EL NIÑO CONDITIONS ▶

In El Niño years, the trade winds are much weaker allowing warm surface water along the equator to pile up along the coast of South America. It then moves north towards California and south toward Chile.

Lots of rain clouds form over this warm part of the ocean. These clouds move inland and dump much more rain than usual in the Americas.

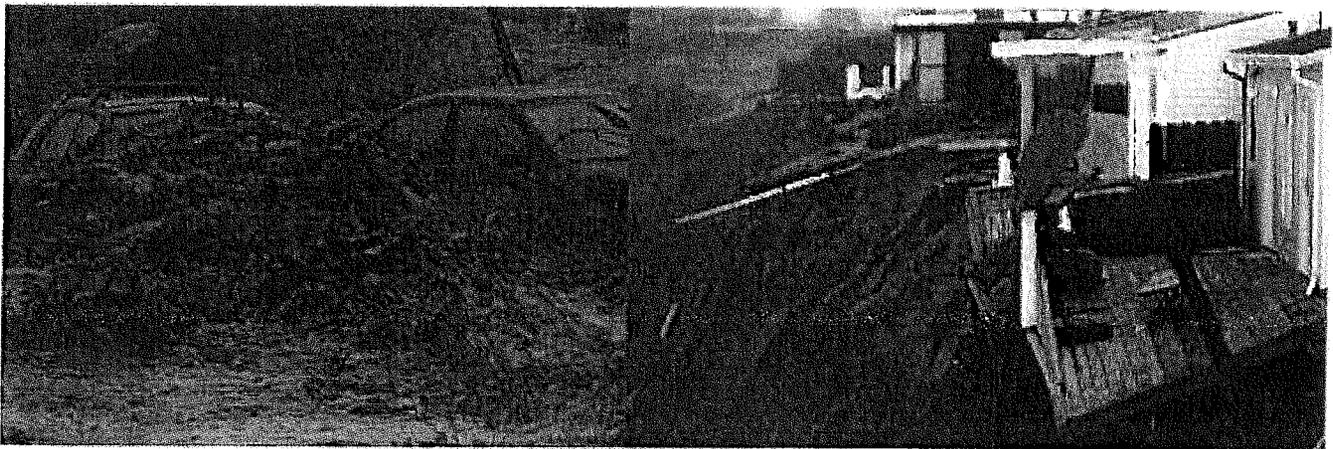
Meanwhile Australia and Indonesia can suffer drought.



The damaged landscape and vegetation from the drought and wildfires that California has been experiencing has made us susceptible to land erosion, widespread debris flow, and isolated mudslides when the rains begin.

A debris flow is a fast-moving mass of unconsolidated, saturated debris that looks like flowing concrete. They can vary in speed from 1-35 miles per hour (mph) and may carry a large amount of wooden debris, clay particles, and even boulders. A mudslide is the most rapid (up to 50 mph) and fluid type of downhill mass wasting. It is a rapid movement of a large mass of mud formed from loose earth and water.

Department's Mission in Response to Mudslides and Debris Flow



The mission of the Department during response to mudslides or debris flow is to ensure that endangered neighborhoods, businesses, hospitals, and vital facilities are safely and systematically evacuated prior to water, mud, or debris intrusion into the locations. In addition, Department personnel will assist with evacuations, traffic control, and provide support to all involved agencies, as needed.

The Department can help ensure the safety and welfare of the public by utilizing advanced notification when possible. The Department shall share information and objectives jointly with all involved agencies consistent with the Incident Command System.

EVACUATION

Responding personnel are reminded that there may be several hundred locations needing evacuation within a short time frame. In addition to evacuations, the Department will be responsible for establishing traffic patterns for ingress and egress of evacuated areas, and for ensuring perimeter security to areas closed due to hazardous conditions.

Department personnel should refer to the Evacuation Incident Checklist found in Volume 2 of the Emergency Operations Guide as well as the Emergency Notification and Mass Communication Guide.

NOTE: Authority to close areas and the ordering of evacuations can be found under:

- *Penal Code Section 409.5*
- *Los Angeles City Charter Sections 131 and 132*
- *Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 57.01.21*
- *Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.224*

What to Do During a Mudslide or Debris Flow



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has provided some basic considerations to remember during or following a mudslide or debris flow:

- Pay special attention to recent burn areas. Burned landscape and vegetation is susceptible to land erosion, debris flow, and isolated mudslides.
- Listen for any unusual sounds that might indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or knocking together. A trickle of flowing or falling mud or debris may precede larger mudslides.
- If near a stream or channel, be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow or change from clear to muddy water. Such changes may indicate mudslide activity upstream, so move quickly.

- Be especially alert when driving. Embankments along roadsides are particularly susceptible to mudslides. Watch the road for collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flow.
- Look for and report broken utility lines and damaged roadways. Reporting these potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further injury.
- NEVER underestimate the power of moving water. Curb high water can easily knock a person off their feet and sweep them downstream. The current can be strong enough to move a small car.



The following safety points were taken from Ford Motor Company’s internet article, “HOW TO DRIVE IN HEAVY RAIN: What to do if you encounter torrential rain on the road.”

SLOW DOWN. The first thing you should do is slow down. This will give you more control and more time to react. You will need both, because when it is raining heavily, the road becomes more slippery, and visibility is limited.

THE START OF THE STORM CAN BE DANGEROUS. When the rain first starts, moisture mixes with the oil on the road and makes everything slippery and dangerous. Heavy rains will eventually wash the oil away. That is when you have to worry about hydroplaning, which is when your car loses contact with the road and almost feels as though it is floating.

HYDROPLANING? TAKE YOUR FOOT OFF THE GAS. If you find yourself hydroplaning, keep calm, take your foot off the gas and steer in a safe direction. Avoid hydroplaning by slowing down, turning off cruise control and avoiding sudden braking or turns.

You are more likely to hydroplane on non-grooved asphalt roads than ribbed concrete —particularly if there are tire ruts worn into the asphalt. Try to avoid any areas on the road where water collects.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DRIVE THROUGH DEEP PUDDLES. Puddles can hide potholes, so try to drive around them, being mindful of vehicles in adjacent lanes.

Do not drive in areas that are flooded or have moving water. Deep water can wreak havoc on your electrical system and engine. As little as a foot of water can float some vehicles, and two feet of rushing water can sweep vehicles away, including Sport Utility Vehicles and pick-up trucks.

TURN ON YOUR HEADLIGHTS. With heavy rain come dark skies, so turn on your headlights. But do not use your high beams, because the extra light can refract against the droplets and can distract drivers.

USE DEFROSTERS AND SET AIR CONDITIONING OR HEAT TO FRESH AIR. Turn on your defrosters to reduce fog, and set your air conditioner or heater on the fresh-air setting.

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE. The spray from trucks or large vehicles can also obscure your vision, so keep your distance or try to pass them if you find a safe opportunity.

HEAD FOR HIGHER GROUND. Look for higher paths to drive on. And if it gets too harsh out there, do not risk it: Find a safe place on higher ground—away from tall, isolated trees and poles in case there is lightning. Pull over to wait for the rain to pass.

BE PREPARED. You can help prepare your vehicle by making sure your headlamps, wiper blades, brakes and tires are always properly maintained.

Any questions regarding the content of this Bulletin should be directed to the Emergency Preparedness Unit, Emergency Operations Division, at (213) 486-5730.



REFERENCES

Los Angeles Police Department Emergency Operations Guide:

- *Volume II; Supervisor’s Field Operations Guide: “Storms and Flooding,”* November 2012
- *Volume IV; Command Officer’s Guide: “Evacuation,”* August 28, 2014
- *Emergency Preparedness Bulletin s:*
 - Volume 10, No. 7 Considerations During an Emergency Response for People with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs – August 28, 2014
 - Volume 10, No. 8 Conducting Community Outreach During an Emergency – the Role of the Senior Lead Officer – August 28, 2014
 - Volume 9, No. 4 Responding to Mudslides or Debris Flows – December 2008
 - Volume 1, No. 1 Storm/Flood Response Guide - October 2004
 - Volume 1, No 2. Storm/Flood Preparedness for Police Personnel and Facilities - October 2004

Los Angeles Police Department Emergency Notification and Mass Communication Plan - 2014

Federal Emergency Management Agency: *During a Landslide or Debris Flow*
www.fema.gov/hazard/landslide/ls_during.shtm

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