

Berkeley CERT

El Niño Flood & Landslide Planning Activity Guide



Heavy rains increase the risk of flooding, landslides, power outages and sinkholes can come with heavy winter storms in Berkeley. The activities here will help you stay safe and reduce the chance of a disaster affecting your home.

1. Start a Disaster Kit & Set Up Communications.



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Easy

In preparing your home and family, check out the [City's disaster preparedness web page](#).

2. Check Your Gutters.

Check your rain gutters for leaves and debris now, and remove any blockages. If you do not feel comfortable getting to your gutters, a local business such as a handyman, contractor, gardener, or landscaper can check and clean out debris for you. This is also a good time to check the connections of gutters and downspouts and be sure the downspouts are clear of leaves, needles or nests.

On a regular basis this winter, check the inlets to storm drains in front of or near your home for blockages. Use a rake to clear the path of leaves and trash. For safety, do not reach with your arm into a clogged drain.

3. Find Your Flood Risk.



Free/
Low-cost



Easy

Go to <https://www.floodsmart.gov/first-prepare-flooding> for flood planning information. You can find flood maps for your area on [FEMA's Flood Map Service Center](#). Enter your address to learn your flood risk, so that you will better understand how to prepare your home and family.

4. Get Flood Insurance.



Easy

Most homeowner's insurance does not cover floods. Being in a low-risk location does not make you immune to flood risks; in fact, over 20% of [National Flood Insurance Program](#) claims are made for homes in a low-risk area.



Typically, there is a 30-Day waiting period from date of purchase before your policy goes into effect, so take a look at your plan before the rains start to keep your family and house safe. If you are a renter and/or live in a condo, you can get flood insurance too. Check your current policy and ask your agent or company what your policy covers.

5. Pick up Sandbags.



Free/
Low-cost

In heavy rains, piled sandbags can block water from flowing into basements or crawlspaces, or any part of your home or yard that is below ground or street level.

Sandbags are usually available at the City Corporation Yard (Between Allston & Bancroft, west of Acton) or at fire stations in Berkeley in advance of a large storm. Many times the fire stations run out of bags, so its always a good idea to call your neighborhood fire station before you come down to pick up sandbags. A fire station map and phone directory can be found here:

<https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/fire/fire-stations>

6. Make Copies of Your Important Documents.



Free/
Low-cost



Easy

Plan to have documents on hand in case you need to leave your home in a hurry, or if you can't access it due to a flood, downed power line, or landslide. Make copies of important documents such as:

- Birth certificates and adoption papers
- Homeowners, renters, and car insurance policies
- Property records, deeds, and titles
- Immigration records
- Vaccination, microchip records, license papers, and photos of pets
- Copies of written prescriptions

In addition, keep some cash on hand. ATM and credit card machines will not work if electricity is out.

Get a one-gallon waterproof bag and put your documents in it. Add the bag to your family's disaster kit and store in a safe place at home, in a safety deposit box, or with a trusted friend or family member out of the area.

If you are familiar with cloud storage tools such as Dropbox, you can also scan your documents and upload them there. This will make the documents accessible from any computer that has Internet access. You can also take photos of the documents and store them in your smartphone.



7. Have a Neighborhood Gathering.



Free/
Low-cost

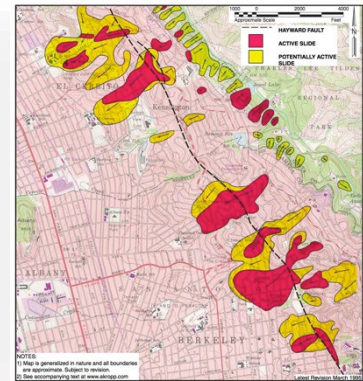


Kid-
friendly

Neighborhood gatherings help to keep your community safer, help you to get to know your neighbors and allow for the sharing of resources and ideas. Consider having a winter storms planning meeting or even a potluck with just a few neighboring houses.

Here are some neighborhood activities that you can do together before any bad weather hits:

- Take a walk around the neighborhood and think about what might happen in a large storm. Are the storm-water intake drains clear of leaves? Can anyone in the community volunteer to clear drains that become clogged?
- Are there any trees that have potentially hazardous branches? Consider contacting an arborist and to check the trees in the neighborhood to see which branches and limbs should be pruned in case of high winds.
- Does anyone need help with their gutters and downspouts?
- Are there any underground creeks in your neighborhood that you should take note of?
- Think about sharing resources: Who has a chainsaw in case of downed limbs? Who has a sturdy, long ladder? Does anybody have a sump pump if a basement floods?
- Maybe your community would like to ‘adopt-a-drain’ from the city.: <https://berkeleyca.gov/community-recreation/volunteering/adopt-drain>



8. See If You Are in a Landslide Area.



Free/
Low-cost



Easy

Check here to see if you are in a potential landslide area.

http://www.akropp.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/berkeley_hills_slide_map.pdf

Here are some landslide warning signs. If you observe these signs, leave the area and contact 9-1-1:

- Water in areas that have not typically been wet before
- New cracks or bulges in the ground, pavements or sidewalk
- Decks and patios tilting or moving
- Tilting or cracking concrete floors and foundations
- Leaning telephone poles, trees, retaining walls or fences
- Unusual sounds, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together
- Sudden decrease in creek water level, or increase in dirtiness of water
- See more: <http://landslides.usgs.gov/learn/prepare.php>



9. Sign up for AC Alert.



Free/
Low-cost



Easy

In an emergency, AC Alert is one of the systems that the City may use to send information and instructions to the community. That's why you want to sign up now!

Every Berkeley Public Library offers internet access you can use to [sign up for AC Alert](#). See the City's [Emergency Notifications web page](#) for more information.

10. Prepare for a power outage.



Kid-
friendly

Winter storms could cause power outages. Stock supplies at home to keep life as normal as possible in an outage:

- Candles can cause fires. Instead, use battery powered or solar powered lanterns and flashlights.
- Store extra batteries for mobile phones and other devices. Also, get in the habit of keeping your devices plugged in and fully charged whenever possible.
- Boredom can set in quickly without power! Have good books, board games, decks of cards, or battery-powered portable devices on hand to keep the family entertained.
- Stay connected with a phone and radio that does not require power.
- Have a back-up plan for any medical devices you use that require power.

In an outage:

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Food will stay cold for 24 – 48 hours.
- Only operate generators outdoors, never inside
- Conserve mobile device batteries by turning off apps and reducing the screen brightness.
- Turn off or disconnect appliances to avoid a surge when the power is restored.
- Do not call 911 to report or ask about a power outage.
- Listen to AM 1610 for emergency info.

To sign up for emergency alerts, visit:
www.acalert.org

*This document was created by Berkeley CERT volunteers.
Learn more about free trainings and other opportunities to get involved with
[Berkeley CERT](#)*