

El Niño Storm Readiness Checklist

A step-by-step guide for property managers | Winter 2026-27

Forecasters give strong odds that a very strong El Niño will peak between November and January, bringing the potential for repeated heavy rain, flash flooding, and high winds across our region. No forecast is guaranteed, but every item below is sound maintenance in any year. Work through the four phases in order, record dates and vendors as you go, and keep this checklist with your storm file as evidence of the board's due diligence.

Phase 1: Plan and Assess

Target: complete by mid-October

Find out what needs attention and get approvals in place before contractor schedules fill up.

Task	Date Done	Vendor / Notes
☐ Walk the property with your maintenance provider, focusing on roofs, drains, slopes, and areas that leaked or flooded in past storms.		
☐ Review board minutes, work orders, and resident complaints from prior wet winters to identify repeat problem spots.		
☐ Pull the reserve study and maintenance manual to confirm which components are due or overdue (roofs, decks, waterproofing, paint).		
☐ Take dated photos of roofs, drains, slopes, balconies, and known problem areas to establish a pre-storm baseline.		
☐ Request proposals for needed work and present them to the board with a recommended priority order.		
☐ Get board approval for storm prep work and set an emergency spending authorization for the manager.		
☐ Review the master insurance policy: water damage coverage, flood and earth movement exclusions, and deductibles.		
☐ Coordinate vendors for potential emergencies: confirm who to call for each area (roofing, plumbing, drainage, trees, electrical, water extraction) and how to reach them after hours.		

Phase 2: Complete Preventive Work

Target: complete by mid-November

Schedule and verify the work. Ask vendors for before-and-after photos of each item as proof of completion.

Roofs and Gutters

Task	Date Done	Vendor / Notes
☐ Roof inspection and repairs completed (tiles, shingles, flashing, membranes, skylights, parapets).		
☐ Gutters and downspouts cleaned, re-secured, and resealed.		
☐ Downspouts discharge away from foundations, walkways, and slopes.		
☐ Flat roof drains and scuppers cleared, with no ponding areas.		

Site Drainage

Task	Date Done	Vendor / Notes
☐ Storm drains, catch basins, and area drains cleaned.		
☐ Drain lines hydro-jetted and camera inspected where flow is in doubt.		
☐ V-ditches, swales, brow ditches, washes, and culverts cleared of debris and vegetation.		
☐ Trench drains and garage-entry drains cleaned and flowing.		
☐ Soil and mulch pulled back from building foundations and weep screeds.		

Building Envelope and Waterproofing

Task	Date Done	Vendor / Notes
☐ Balcony, deck, and walkway waterproofing inspected and repaired.		
☐ Sealant renewed at windows, doors, sliders, and wall penetrations.		
☐ Exterior stucco and wall cracks sealed.		
☐ Exposed wood (fascia, trim, railings) primed and painted where coating has failed.		

Plumbing and Below-Grade Areas

Task	Date Done	Vendor / Notes
☐ Sump pumps, floats, and alarms tested, with backup power confirmed.		
☐ All backflow assemblies (domestic water, fire sprinkler, and irrigation) tested, with shutoff valves exercised, labeled, and easy to reach in an emergency.		
☐ Sewer laterals and main lines camera inspected and cleared of roots or blockages.		
☐ Backwater valves inspected, or installation evaluated for low-lying units.		
☐ Parking structure drains cleared and deck leaks identified.		
☐ Riser, mechanical, and electrical rooms checked for water entry points.		

Landscape, Trees, and Slopes

Task	Date Done	Vendor / Notes
☐ Hazard tree assessment completed; deadwood removed and canopies thinned near roofs, walkways, and parking.		
☐ Erosion control installed on bare, burned, or unstable slopes (netting, wattles, ground cover).		
☐ Irrigation leaks repaired and controllers set to a winter schedule or fitted with rain sensors.		
☐ Irrigation shutoff valves confirmed working and accessible so water can be fully shut off during heavy rain to prevent overwatering and oversaturated slopes.		

Electrical, Lighting, and Common Areas

Task	Date Done	Vendor / Notes
☐ Exterior GFCI outlets tested and weatherproof covers in place.		
☐ Walkway, stair, and parking lighting repaired.		
☐ Pool equipment pad protected from flooding and pool deck drains flowing.		
☐ Slippery surfaces, worn coatings, and trip hazards addressed on walkways and stairs.		

Phase 3: Get Storm-Ready

Target: before the first major storm

Make sure everyone knows what to do and who to call when the rain starts.

Task	Date Done	Vendor / Notes
☐ Emergency vendor agreement in place with response times and after-hours contact numbers.		
☐ Board, manager, and vendor contact list updated and shared.		
☐ Sandbags, tarps, wet vacs, and other supplies staged at known flood points.		
☐ Resident notice sent: clear patio and balcony drains, secure loose items, and report leaks right away.		
☐ Leak and damage reporting process confirmed so issues reach the right people quickly.		
☐ Storm file set up to hold photos, work orders, invoices, and insurance correspondence.		

Phase 4: During and After Each Storm

Ongoing through the season

Small problems caught early stay small. Repeat these steps after every significant storm.

Task	Date Done	Vendor / Notes
☐ Post-storm property walk completed within 24 to 48 hours.		
☐ Drains, gutters, and ditches re-cleared of new debris.		
☐ Leaks, slope movement, fallen trees, and other damage photographed and logged.		
☐ Emergency repairs ordered and temporary protection (tarps, sandbags) put in place.		
☐ Insurance carrier notified promptly of any potential claim.		
☐ Board updated on conditions, actions taken, and costs.		
☐ Lessons learned noted for next season and the reserve study update.		

Need help identifying issues? Let us know. We'll walk the property with you to help make sure your community is ready. Contact your ProTec account manager or visit **ProTec.com**.