



California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways El Niño Preparedness Recommendation for Boaters

El Niño -- a large-scale, ocean-atmosphere climate interaction linked to warming of sea surface temperatures across parts of the Pacific Ocean – may bring big storms to California this winter. Boat owners and marina operators should be ready for extreme storms through spring 2016.

Below you'll find resources about El Niño, its potential effects on California's waterways and safety precautions to take.

What Boaters Should Know about El Niño Winter Boating Safety

Keep informed about the latest weather, water and tidal conditions.

Develop a list of weather resources, sign up for alerts and use them before boating. In addition to local weather forecasts, critical meteorological information is available for boaters and marina operators:

www.weather.gov

www.wrh.noaa.gov

www.navcen.uscg.gov

www.cdewater.ca.gov

National Weather Service – Active Alerts, Forecasts, Conditions

National Weather Service Western Region – Detailed Hazards

United State Coast Guard – Local Notice to Mariners

California Data Exchange – River Conditions

Tune to local radio stations or the [National Weather Radio](#) Broadcasts on frequencies of 162.400, 162.425, 162.450, 162.475, 162.525, and 162.550 MHz in areas where available.

Check your boat's required safety equipment. California boating laws require recreational boats to carry safety equipment including flares to visually signal distress; a whistle, bell or horn to sound distress calls; and serviceable life jackets on board. After a busy summer boating season, make sure your required safety equipment is ready and in working order.

During the winter it is especially important to have good anchoring equipment and bailing devices and to know how to use them. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or the U.S. Power Squadrons offer complimentary vessel safety checks. For a full list of required equipment and for general safety information visit the [ABCs of California Boating](#).

Avoid boating during strong weather. High tides, storm surges, poor visibility, moving sandbars and debris contribute to dangerous conditions during winter. Conditions on the water change rapidly. Boaters who must be on the water this winter should carry a registered Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) for marine use and know how to use it. For more Information: www.sarsat.noaa.gov/beacon



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Always file a float plan with friends or family. Searches for an overdue boat are more likely to succeed if the U.S. Coast Guard or other rescue agencies have certain facts. For your own safety, before you go boating, file a [float plan](#) with a reliable person who will notify authorities if necessary.

At a minimum a float plan should include the location to which you will be heading and your approximate time of return. Check in regularly with those who are aware of your plan, especially if your plan changes.

Have an emergency and accident plan in place for your boat and home. Boaters must know what to do in an emergency. Emergency and accident procedures for recreational boaters can be viewed in the [ABCs of California Boating](#). Read this important information and perform an accident drill with your crew. Create and carry a contact list of emergency resources such as local first responders.

Make sure you also have an [emergency plan](#) in place for you and your family at home and at your workplace. Create a list of local resources including:

- Fire department
- Public health department
- Public works dispatch center
- Electric/gas utility provider

Check that your emergency supply kit is up-to-date. Emergency supply kits for both home and boat should be checked, and older supplies including food, water, batteries, maps and contact data should be replaced with fresh supplies. Include a flashlight and battery-powered or hand-crank radio, blankets, medicines, and cash.

If your boat is moored or docked throughout the winter season, check before and after a storm to make sure dock lines are properly secured. Know how your boat should be docked and/or moored to avoid storm damage. Take a boating safety class or review [how to secure your boat](#).

Most importantly, keep **safety** in mind and **never risk human life for the sake of protecting property!**

Please share this information. For more information on El Niño and storm preparation:

- www.storms.ca.gov
- www.weather.gov
- dbw.parks.ca.gov

www.coastal.ca.gov/climate/extreme-weather/el-nino/Questions_and_Answers_on_El_Nino_2015_Final.pdf