Attention: USDA Rural Development is notifying rural communities and the electric systems that serve them about potential weather-related events caused by El Niño effect.

According to the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA), "El Niño is a disruption of the ocean-atmosphere system in the Tropical Pacific having important consequences for weather and climate around the globe. Across the United States, precipitation impacts from El Niño are likely to be seen during the upcoming months."

What are the risks of weather related events due to El Niño effects?

Increased precipitation and flooding in high-risk areas of the country, especially areas that have suffered recent droughts and wild fires, may impact your community. Drought conditions have led to several extensive wildfires in western states. These fires have destroyed vegetation that would reduce peak runoff from heavy precipitation events, increasing the risks of flash floods or severe flooding.

What can you do to prepare?

- ✓ Review and update your Vulnerability & Risk Assessment (VRA) and Emergency Restoration Plan (ERP).
- ✓ Make sure that the contact information in your plan is current and lists all assets that would be vulnerable to a flash flood.
- ✓ Exercise your plan by having a practice flash flood event with all participants that would normally respond to a real event.
- ✓ Connect with your state and local emergency managers.
- ✓ Ensure that essential emergency equipment (generators, etc.) is stored outside potential flood areas and on high ground. Test the equipment to make sure it is in good working order.

What assistance is available?

Apply for an RUS Electric Program Infrastructure Loan	http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-infrastructure-loan-loan-guarantee-program
Up to date weather information	http://www.weather.gov
Guide for Electric System Emergency Restoration Plan	http://www.rd.usda.gov/files/UEP_Bulletin_1730B-2.pdf
Get help after a disaster (FEMA Disaster Assistance)	http://www.disasterassistance.gov/

What assistance is available? (Cont'd)

FEMA Eligibility for Electric Utility Repair	http://www.fema.gov/9500-series-policy-Publications/electric-utility-repair
FEMA guidance on preparing for a flood	http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1409002852888-3c5d1f64f12df02aa801901cc7c311ca/how_to_prepare_flood_033014_508.pdf
FEMA guidance on preparing for natural disasters	http://www.ready.gov/natural-disasters
Community Guidelines for Energy Emergencies	http://energy.gov/oe/services/energy-assurance/emergency-preparedness/community-guidelines-energy-emergencies
Emergency Preparedness	http://energy.gov/oe/services/energy-assurance/emergency-preparedness
Federal Authorities	http://energy.gov/oe/services/energy-assurance/emergency-preparedness/federal-authorities
Response and Restoration	http://energy.gov/oe/services/energy-assurance/response-and-restoration
Emergency Situation Reports	http://energy.gov/oe/services/energy-assurance/response-and-restoration/emergency-situation-reports

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