

# Severe Weather

## Purpose

The State of California is vulnerable to a variety of severe weather hazards. This incident annex addresses the hazards associated with severe weather. When severe weather occurs, the impacts can be devastating and may affect isolated locations or multiple jurisdictions simultaneously.



When the impacts exceed the capabilities of local jurisdictions, the State must respond in a prompt, organized, and efficient manner to save lives, mitigate property damage, and restore a sense of normalcy to the community. This response is coordinated through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) in concert with local, state, Federal, volunteer, and private sector partners.

## Situation and Assumptions

### El Niño

During El Niño, trade winds weaken. Warm water is pushed back east, toward the west coast of the Americas. El Niño means Little Boy in Spanish. South American fishermen first noticed periods of unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean in the 1600s. The full name they used was El Niño de Navidad because El Niño typically peaks around December.

El Niño can affect our weather significantly. The warmer waters cause the Pacific jet stream to move south of its neutral position. With this shift, areas in the northern U.S. and Canada are dryer and warmer than usual. But in the U.S. Gulf Coast and Southeast, these periods are wetter than usual and have increased flooding.

### Hail

Hail is considered severe when it reaches 1 inch in diameter. Hail can reach sizes much larger than the severe threshold size. Hail causes close to \$1 billion in damage to property and crops each year in the U.S. While property is typically at greatest risk for hail damage, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimate that 24 people are injured from hail each year.

### Thunderstorms

The National Weather Service (NWS) defines a severe thunderstorm as any storm that produces one or more of the following: a tornado, damaging wind speeds of 58 mph (50 knots) or greater, and/or hail 1 inch in diameter or larger.

## Continuity of Operations (Annex Specific)

The goal of emergency management is to restore operations of any organization back to its primary purpose, or “normal.” In some cases, restoration of operations may have to be a new normal.

## Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

This organization follows SEMS/NIMS requirements, specifically incorporating the Incident Command System into emergency and incident operations.

## Plan Development

This annex was selected for inclusion in this Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) following best practices Hazard/Threat Analysis and is reviewed annually for currency and applicability.

- Severe weather-related hazards can occur at any time throughout the year
- Local jurisdictions adversely affected by severe weather may declare local State of Emergency upon being affected
- Local jurisdictions adversely affected by severe weather may use mutual aid agreements as part of their response to the disaster
- Local jurisdictions affected by severe weather may request resources from the State as the situation evolves

## Authorities and References

[Center for Disease Control - Natural Disasters and Severe Weather](#)

[National Weather Service – Severe Weather Awareness](#)

[Ready.Gov – Severe Weather](#)

## Incident Command Actions

For predictable severe weather, such as excessive rain, wind, and/or snow, the following should be included in your procedures:

### Before

- Review your current Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and make sure it is up to date with current best practices
- Monitor weather via reliable weather sources, such as NWS
- have stored rain gear or have material that could be used for rain protection, such as plastic bags with head and arm cutouts
- Have enough food and water available for your site (typically a gallon of water, per day, for everyone)
- Access to sand and sandbags at a convenient location
- Make sure there are no outstanding work orders from any earlier storm damage

- Make sure all gutters, roof drains, downspouts, and catch basins are free and clear of any debris that might block normal water flow
- Be prepared for use of substitute employees and for working custodians extra hours, as needed
- If sites have generators, make sure they are currently operational and appropriately ready to run
- Review and/or prepare for parent communications about probable event
- Consider cancelling all field trips
- Trim trees and remove dead limbs or trees
- Name and verify possible evacuation sites
- Obtain a large map of the geographical area of your district that shows streets and utilities

### During

- Start an activity log of the event (use the ICS 214 log for this purpose)
- Follow your student dismissal protocol
- Make sure you have copies of first taken attendance of the day and have proper staff double check to make sure all persons are accounted for
- Follow staff dismissal protocol
- Follow your emergency operations plan
- Provide damage control to minimize or mitigate property damage or loss
- Be prepared for possible power outage
- Monitor issues happening in your community

### After

- Conduct debris and mud clean up (use your property insurance provider for aid)
- Figure out classroom availability and possible alternate classroom locations for damaged and unavailable classrooms
- Conduct inspection of sites and seal off damaged areas from access by site seers
- Be prepared for mold inspections and remediation of possible mold damaged areas
- Collect and complete all documentation, including logs, pictures taken, damage assessments, etc.
- Accounting for all overtime performed
- Have returning staff check in time and make sure they are individually managing personal impacts caused by the event
- Prepare staff to collaborate with returning students and their families (may need crisis counseling referrals)
- Report any injuries to workers' compensation (risk management)
- Keep staff well informed of all progress and any concerns