



Los Angeles Times

Water and Power

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Your guide to the California drought from the Los Angeles Times.

NEWS AND POLICY

Rainy days: El Niño is here. The storm system brought rain and snow to California, and the wet weather will continue throughout the week. By Wednesday, [snow could fall at elevations as low as 3,000 feet](#). “The typical El Niño weather pattern has developed this week. That will usher in a series of storms. It is happening quite textbook,” said Michelle Mead, warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Be prepared: This map shows [where to pick up sandbags and find shelter during El Niño in L.A.](#) There’s reason to be prepared: “Come Tuesday, this is going to be a tremendous storm, and we’re going to see the Los Angeles River almost go up to the top later in the week,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti.

ON THE GROUND

Time for inspection: What should you do now to avoid damage from El Niño this spring? [Have your home and yard inspected](#). Site visits can be expensive, but the move could save money down the line. “All the engineers

expensive, but the move could save money down the line. All the engineers are busy now, especially because of El Niño. And currently with the city of Los Angeles, they've got a one-month delay in plan check before anyone could actually even look at the plans," said EJ Thacker of Sinai Construction.

Clearing storm basins: See something, say something — about **abandoned furniture and trash**, that is. Sanitation crews in Los Angeles [cleaned 40,000 catch basins in preparation for heavy rains](#) this spring, but officials warn that old couches and mattresses could block those drainage sites and lead to significant flooding. That's what happened in Boyle Heights last fall when an inch of rain fell in 30 minutes. "El Niño is going to expose the deteriorated state of the infrastructure," said a board member with Fix the City.

OFFBEAT

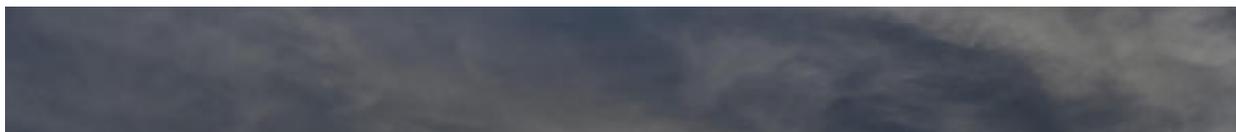
Dirty air: The **fog** in San Francisco is [carrying a dirty secret: toxic mercury](#). Scientists found the fog deposits monomethyl mercury as it crosses the city. "On a relative scale, the levels of mercury are quite low and of no health concern," said Peter Weiss-Penzias, a professor at UC Santa Cruz, who also noted the mercury can build up in organisms.

BIG IDEAS

"We've been feeding people with this food for generations. You want to pay more for food? Or you want all your food from China? Fine. Don't come complaining to me."

– Shawn Coburn, whose 1,200-acre farm in Five Points has [fields gone dry thanks to the drought](#)

DROUGHT SNAPSHOT





A view of downtown L.A. from Montecito Heights as a storm front creeps into the Southland. (Robert Gauthier / Los Angeles Times)

DAILY TIP

Here's [how to stay safe behind the wheel when the El Niño storms hit](#):

- Check that your windshield wipers are in good condition. Remember you must have the car's lights on if your windshield wipers are moving.
- Reduce your speed on wet and icy roads.
- Should you encounter fog, slow down and turn on your vehicle's low beams.
- Stock your car with tire chains, flashlights, flares, a small shovel, scraper, blankets, snacks and drinking water.

LOOKING AHEAD

Tuesday: The state Water Resources Control Board will meet in Sacramen-

to.

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