
7 Systems Of Your Home To Pay Close Attention To When Preparing For 2026 EL Niño Storm

No Matter What the Year of Your Home

marc mazza - August 29, 2026



2026 El Niño STORM IS NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY

The 2026 El Niño storm is not to be taken lightly. It's been widely reported in the news outlets that the storm is gonna carry with it millions and millions of gallons of water to be dropped in the Los Angeles area. If you live in the Los Angeles area, you may want to look at your home just a little differently ahead of the storm. I've put together a list of seven items within the systems of your home, which you should go look at immediately and prepare them for the possibility of water infiltration.



Water Infiltration within building walls and windows

WINDOWS

Windows makes up about 25% of leaks into a building. So if you have older windows just pay close attention to the metal connections of the frame because in the older wood and aluminum windows the connections are where we see the majority of leaks.

Retrofit windows are new windows that are installed into an existing frame. Basically, the installer will remove the movable parts to the existing windows within the older window system, leaving only the original frame in the existing building wall.

If you happen to have these retrofit style windows, the areas that are most venerable to water infiltration is the trim on the exterior side of the window where it attaches to the wall. The trim that attaches to the wall requires sealant and this sealant needs to be maintained on a regular basis. If not, the water will run behind the trim and into the building through the top of the window in most cases.

But no matter what type of window you possess, just make sure the weep holes inside the track are cleared and able to drain water.



ROOFING

Roofing leaks make up about 40% of all building leaks here in Los Angeles. There are so many different types of roofing systems and are just as many different types of roofing materials used here in LA. The most common are composition, rolled roofing or torchdown, and cement tile roof materials.

Each of these roofing materials all require different approaches to maintenance. If you're trying to stay ahead of the big El Niño storm headed our way this winter, you'll need to know what type of roofing system you possess in order to properly inspect it for service.

No matter which roofing system you have, there are similar components which are usually found in every roofing system. To start off, you'll want to check the penetrations which is anything that enters the roofing materials and requires a sealant too keep water out of the building. You're looking for cracks in the sealant which should be re-sealed with the appropriate roof sealant.

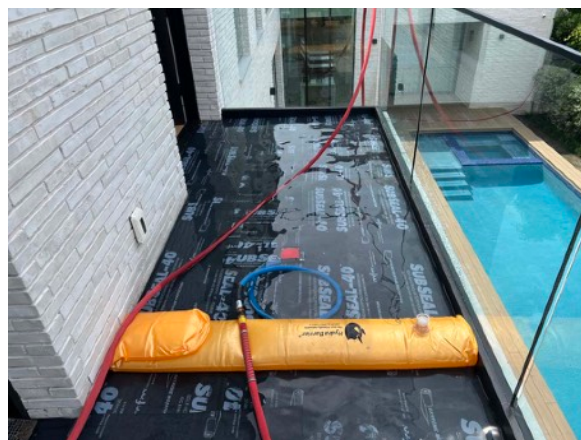
With composition and tile roof systems roofs you will be looking for damaged, cracked, split or missing materials. Rolled roofing or torch-down roofing systems you will want to pay close attention of the seams of the roof for loose pieces of roofing materials. And lastly, and most importantly, keep the roof clear of debris.

DECKS AND BALCONIES

Decks and balconies make up only about 15% of all the leaks we test here in Los Angeles. There are so many different types of deck and balcony systems it would be nearly impossible to mention all of them here, but let's discuss the most popular.

With decks and balconies they start with the same framing systems as the building code in Los Angeles is very strict when it comes to decks and balconies. It's what's installed on the top that leaves it vulnerable to water intrusion.

The most popular deck waterproofing membranes



are mesh or fiberglass top coats, hot mopped membranes, or a rolled on membrane of many different manufactures. The type of membrane applied to the wood structure may vary quite a bit but the overall function of the material is usually the same. The biggest difference is the lifespan of the material once installed. This if it was installed correctly.

There are so many different reasons why a waterproofing may fail before its designed life. Application of the membrane is probably the biggest culprit second to that is protection of the waterproofing itself. That is , whatever material is applied over the waterproofing membrane. There is tile, or other rolled on materials available that are designed to extend the life and protect the water proofing membrane.

One more component to the deck system are the flashings. The flashing is installed against the building, under the door and around railing or other penetrations.

As far as water intrusion into these deck systems, the location where decks typically leak isn't usually in the middle, as most people would think. Not at all, based our many tests of decks and balconies here in Los Angeles the leaks usually happen around the perimeter of the deck. Whether its the flashings, drains, the railings, or anywhere near the building our tests discover the majority of leaks are in these areas close to the building.

As a homeowner, you may want to inspect the areas close to the building for cracks and openings in these areas. Other areas to pay close attention to are railings where they make contact into the deck and where they connect onto the building systems. These areas may have small cracks at the connection or the bolts or screws may require sealant.



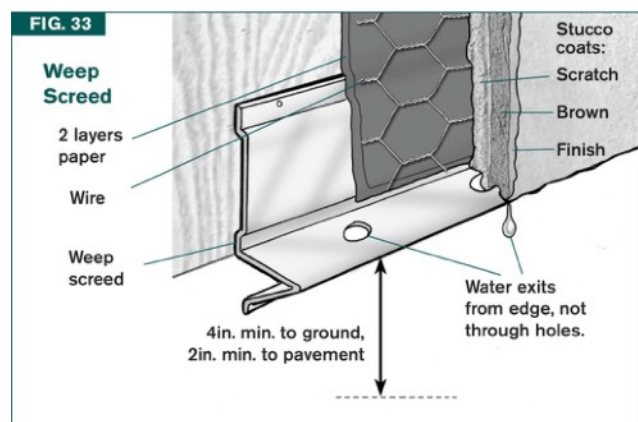
STUCCO OR SIDING CLAD WALLS

Whether or not you have stucco clad walls, metal siding or wood siding, this tip is for you. In any of these wall systems, The main component of the wall system no matter what the cladding is, the WRB or water resistive barrier is

make sure you thoroughly inspect the connections of the wall to other

systems like windows, gutters, or trim from say windows. Especially retrofit windows which require constant maintenance I.e. sealant at the trim to wall connection.

Additionally, look for other penetrations such as pipes, vents, plugs, light fixtures into the wall.. Seal these connections with a good 50 year polyurethane sealant.



DRAINAGE AT OR NEAR THE FOUNDATION

Foundation drainage is crucial for maintaining a healthy leak free home or building. Before the 2026 El Niño storm gets here, take a walk around the perimeter of the foundation of the building and there are some key conditions that we're going to be looking for.

What you're looking for are areas where water will

either sit close to the foundation or where the ground is sloped back towards the foundation. This is called negative grade, and it's not a good thing.

Negative grade can contribute to water infiltration at the sill plate which leads to water entering directly into the building, or if it's a raised foundation, like so many in LA are, water will enter under the home and just sit there with nowhere to drain.

This is bad for 2 reasons. #1 - the foundation runs the risk of settlement at a tremendous cost to the building owner. #2 - The water gets trapped under the building and leads to mold growth. Having experienced both of these conditions, they are both extremely expensive to remedy and therefore should never be overlooked.

Over the long term of having foundational issues is that in time, these different conditions collectively can absolutely damage the structural stability of the building in other long term problems which carry with it expensive repairs.

Gutters and Downspouts

Although it doesn't rain that much here in Los Angeles, but when it does it really pours no pun intended. This 2026 El Niño storm is supposed to be epic in terms of water dumping on the ground. And let's be honest, when we see rain falling, this is where we notice it right? Let's be honest, we see it on the streets, in your yards and when we're sitting in traffic on the 405.

But what most people don't even realize is that the roof takes up a huge footprint on your lot. And the rain still falls but when it falls onto the roof, it is usually collected in your gutter system as it should be.

The gutter system is designed specifically to collect water that runs off your roof and divert it safely to a location to be collected elsewhere. Now if you don't have a gutter system, then the water is going to fall close to the foundation where I would direct you to the last section above this one.

But how much water is collected on a roof? Well, here is an example of how much water can be collected during a 1" rain event and I think it will surprise you.

So, if a roof makes up 3500 square feet on your 10,000 square foot lot, that means according to Google that roughly **2000 gallons of water will drop onto your roof deck with only 1" of rainfall.**

Think about that for a second... 2000 gallons of water collected in the gutter system for just one inch of rainfall. So where does all that rain fall go? Well, the water ends up going into your gutter system and then into the downspouts and then hopefully it drains away from the building or, it drains into a sub surface drainage system. Building code requires that water drain away from the building by a minimum of 25% slope. That equals 1/4 inch per foot.

But I would recommend prior to El Niño is to have your gutter system evaluated to make sure that it's clean first of all and that secondly it's large enough to handle the amount of rain volume. Your roof may collect. Not all gutter systems installed are installed or calculated to meet the volume of your roof system. In fact, there's an equation that can determine the amount of volume your gutter system should be able to handle. And that looks like this...

DRAINAGE DESIGN METHODOLOGY

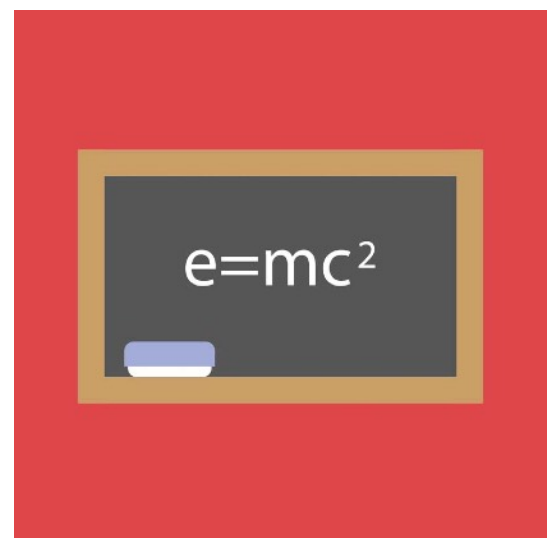
Stormwater runoff calculations were prepared using the **Rational Method**, expressed as: $Q=C \times I \times A$

According to CHAT, the **Rational Method** is a common engineering method used to calculate the **peak stormwater runoff rate** from a roof or drainage area. That runoff rate is then used to determine the required **gutter and downspout capacity**.

Where:

- **Q** = Peak runoff rate
- **C** = Runoff coefficient
- **I** = Rainfall intensity
- **A** = Drainage area

In short, I would highly recommend that you install



gutters if you do not have them, If you do, make sure they are of adequate dimensions. Make sure if you have existing gutters that your gutter system be inspected, cleaned and serviced if necessary ahead of the 2026 El Niño storm.