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El Nino Preparedness: Let's Bag It!

By Cathy Dausman



CERT sandbag volunteers Tim Freeman, John Burgess, John Haffner and Gordon Nathan last December at fire station 41 in Moraga. Photo provided

winter, said Duncan Seibert, Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team program manager. In Lafayette, sand will be available at the public works building; in Moraga and Orinda, sand will be available at Moraga-Orinda Fire District stations 41, 43 and 44.

While CERT does not teach sandbagging at its regular classes, Seibert says CERT volunteers would likely staff sandbag stations and offer "just-in-time training" for this skill.

A garage is a particularly vulnerable spot for water to gain entry into a residence, Seibert says. He suggests using 10 mil plastic sheeting held in place with heavy tape before setting out sandbags to divert the water flow. A one-bag-high sandbag wall constructed along a 30-foot-long garage door will take about an hour to make and offers up to four inches in height of water diversion.

Fill the sandbags only half full, fold the top of the bag over and tuck it underneath the bag, facing into the direction of the water flow. Do not stack your pile over two sandbags high unless there is a building or backing to support it.

The sandbags will deteriorate over time so it is important not to stage them too early. "Stack them when you get them where you need them," Seibert says.

Although not pretty when deployed, the ounce of prevention sandbags offer a homeowner is surely worth a pound of cure.

Lamorinda Sand Bag Pickup Locations

(sand and bags available as needed):

Lafayette

Public Works yard, 3001 Camino Diablo

In some ways an El Nino winter of warm temperatures and plentiful rain spells a welcome relief to drought-weary Lamorindans. However, much depends on just where that rainfall goes, and where it should not go (see the Dec. 16 article "Water, Water Everywhere: A Cautionary Tale" in the Lamorinda Weekly archives). Perhaps high on every resident's list is the wish that outside water should remain just that: outside.

While an onslaught of water cannot be stopped, it can be diverted to an area where it does the least amount of damage. In this case, sandbags are important tools.

If your home is located in a known flood zone or on a hill, be prepared to deploy sandbags where needed 48 hours ahead of a major storm.

Each Lamorinda municipality will keep a cache of sand and sandbags for its residents' needs this

Moraga

MOFD station 41, 1280 Moraga Way

Orinda

MOFD station 43, 20 Via Las Cruces

MOFD station 44, 295 Orchard Road

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[back](#)

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